



HINE
HABERLIN

A TALE OF THREE BROTHERS
PART ONE: HELLHOUSE

SPAWN®



ISSUE 170 DIGITAL EDITION

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SUNRISE
HOTEL,
NORMAL,
ILLINOIS.

JEEPERS,
CREEPERS,
WHERE'D YA
GET THOSE
PEEPERS?

IS IT
OKAY IF I
LEAVE
NOW?

WHY'S
THAT
SWEET
CHEEKS?
NOT
HAVING
FUN?

IT'S SUNDAY. I ALWAYS SEE
MOMSY ON SUNDAY. WE GO TO CHURCH
AND THEN WE FIX LUNCH TOGETHER. WE'RE
HAVING WIENER SCHNITZEL... I THINK... AND
THEN... AND THEN... I FORGET... WAIT... OKAY...
YEAH... AFTER LUNCH WE TAKE SNAPPY AND
PUFFBALL FOR WALKIES ALONG PINE RIDGE,
AND I HAVE TO MAKE THE POTATO
SALAD... FOR LUNCH... SO...



...I WON'T
TELL
ANYONE. I
PROMISE.

NEVER.

WELL,
NO. I
GUESS
YOU
WON'T.

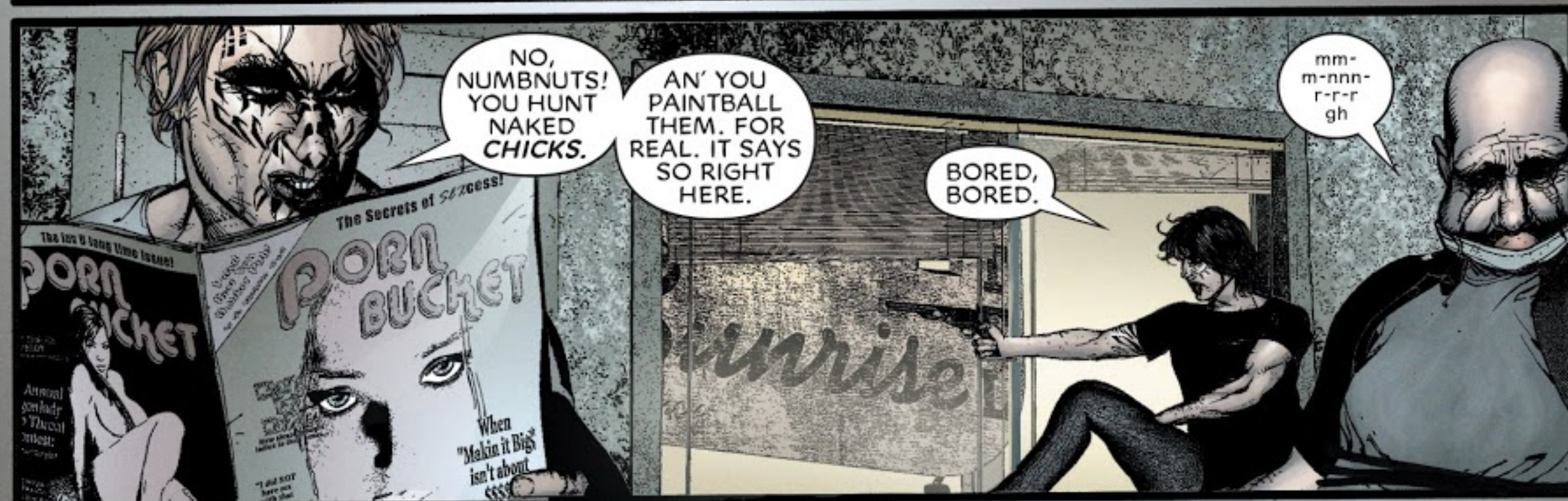
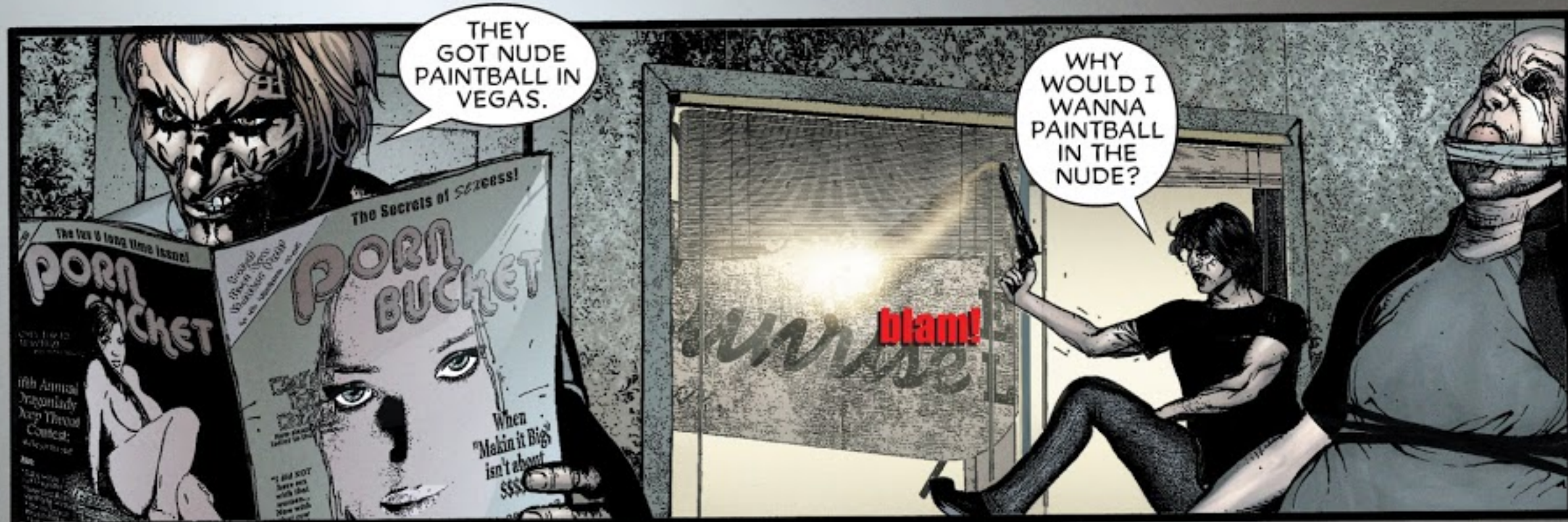
HEY, YOU
WANT ME TO
SEND MOMSY
THE PICTURES
I TOOK ON
MY CELL?

KIDDING!

G'WAN.
GEDDOUDA
HERE.











AHH!

BAD DREAM?



HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WATCHING ME?



IT'S SO DAMNED HOT IN HERE. YOU COULD REALLY USE AIR CONDITIONING, YOU KNOW.

AND A SHOWER.

AND THAT MATTRESS. I SWEAR THERE'S SOMETHING MOVING IN THERE.



YEAH, I HAD A BAD DREAM.

YOU CALLED ME A WITCH.

YOU ARE A WITCH.

THEN YOU ROASTED ME ALIVE.

AND DID STUFF WITH CHAINS.



ARE YOU STILL MAD AT ME?



LATER.

YOU'RE
SURE
ABOUT
THIS?

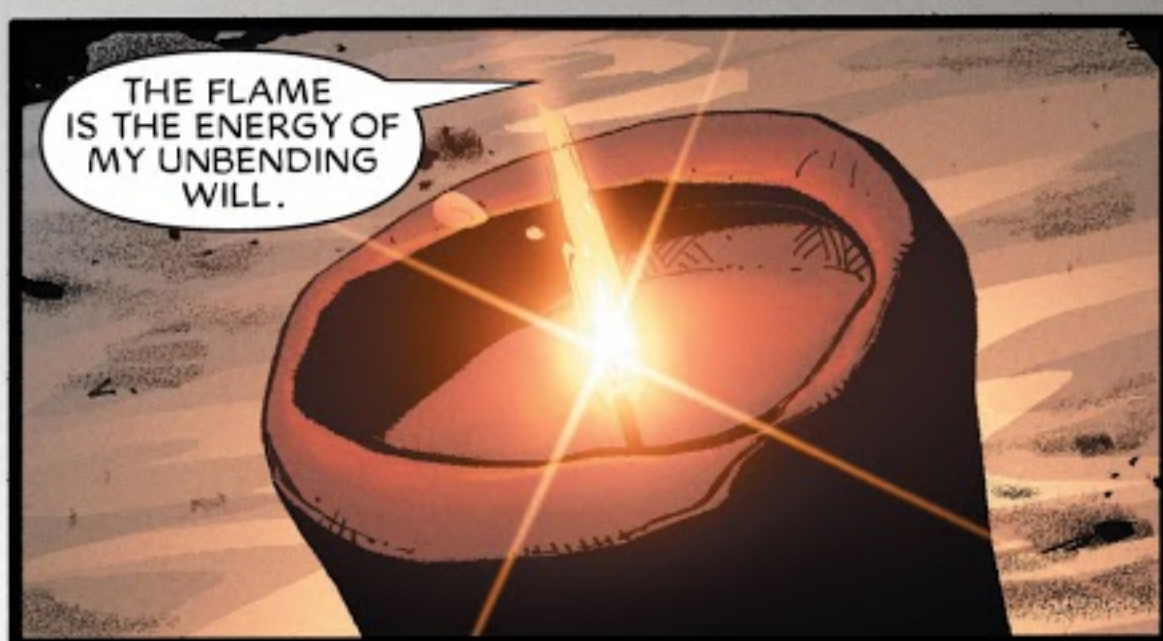
I'M SURE.
COME ON.
IMPRESS
ME.

ALL RIGHT.
MY COSTUME IS A
SYMBIOTE. IT FEEDS OFF
ME AND IN RETURN IT
PROTECTS ME.

IT'S SENTIENT
BUT MOST OF
THE TIME IT DOES
EXACTLY WHAT I
TELL IT.









YOU SEE.



NO!



YOU'RE
WRONG,
NYX. YOU
CAN'T HEAL
ME.



LOOK
AGAIN.



THE
FORCES I
COMMUNE
WITH ARE AS
NATURAL AS
YOURS.



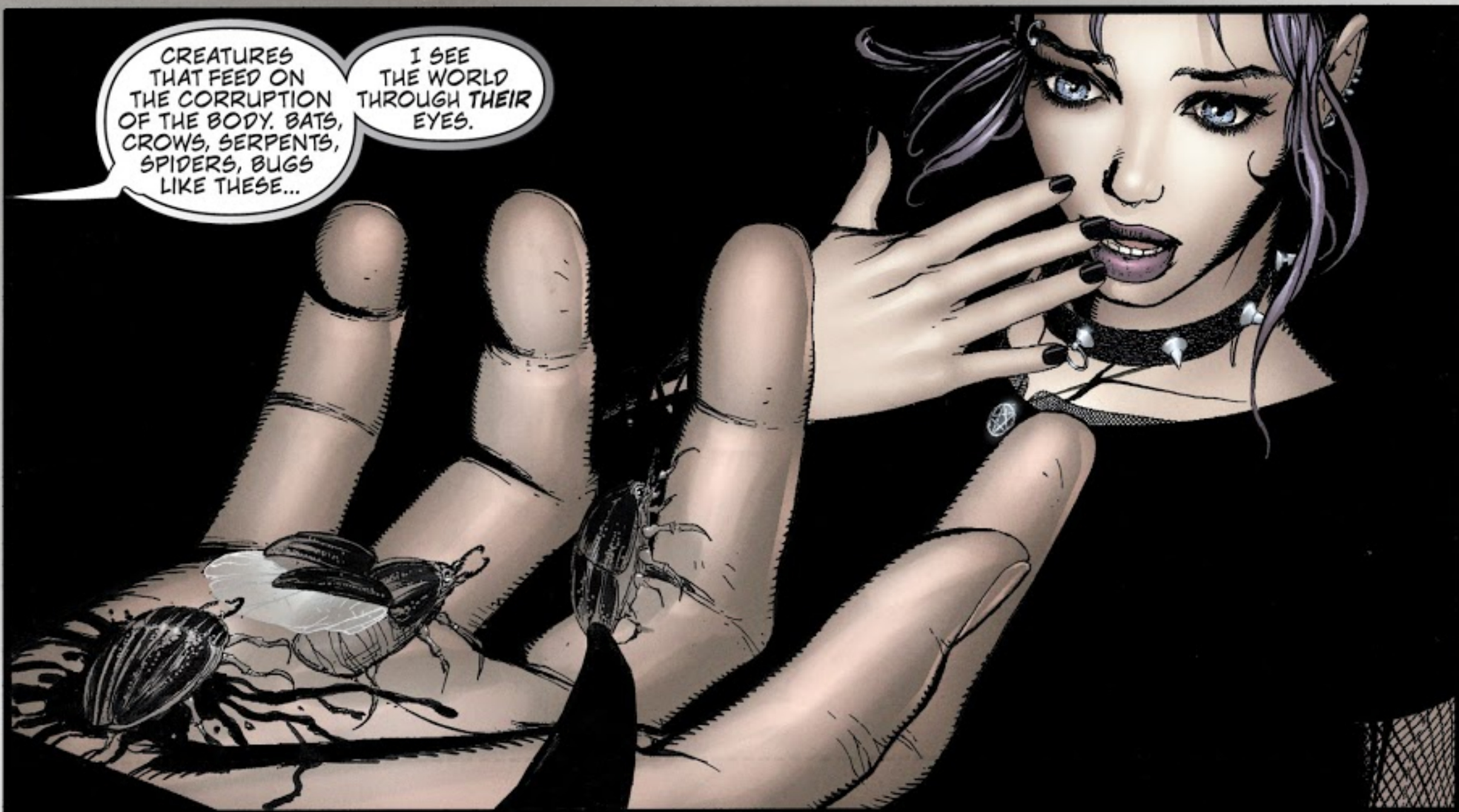
BUT THEY
REPRESENT
THE **DARK** SIDE
OF NATURE.



CREATURES
THAT SCUTTLE
THROUGH THE
SEWERS BENEATH
YOUR FEET.



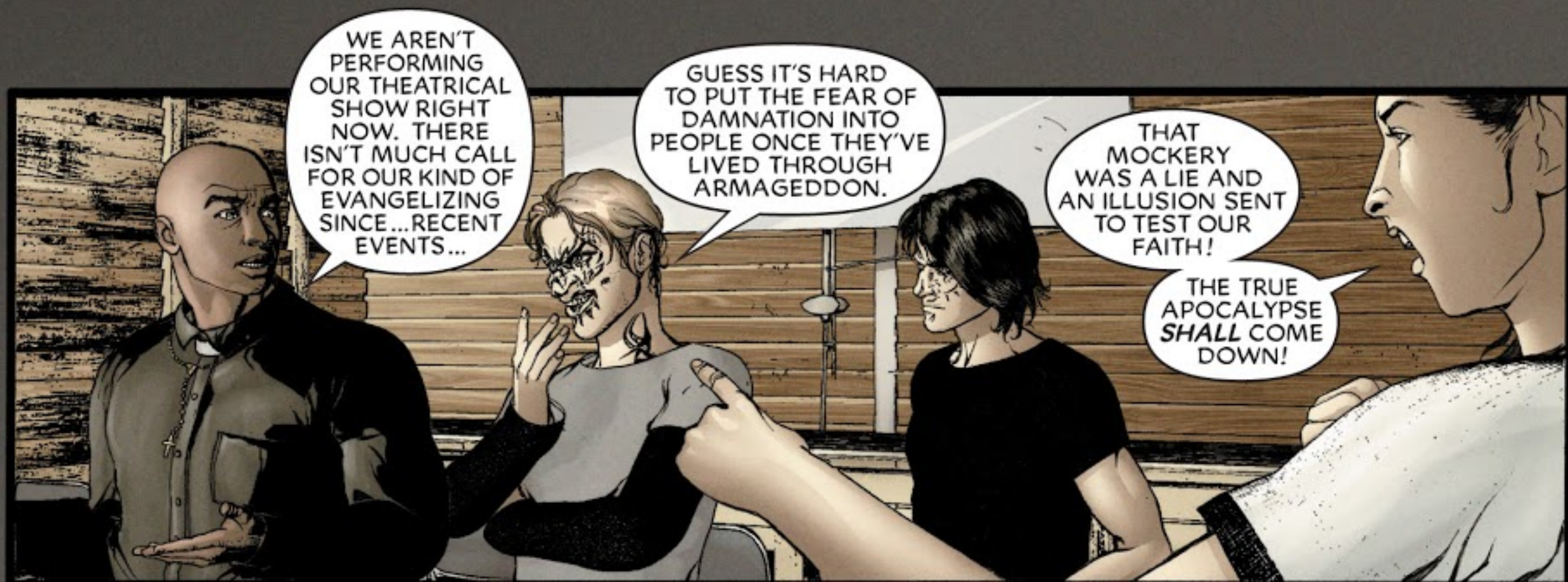
CREATURES
THAT HAUNT BURIAL
PITS AND
CEMETERIES.

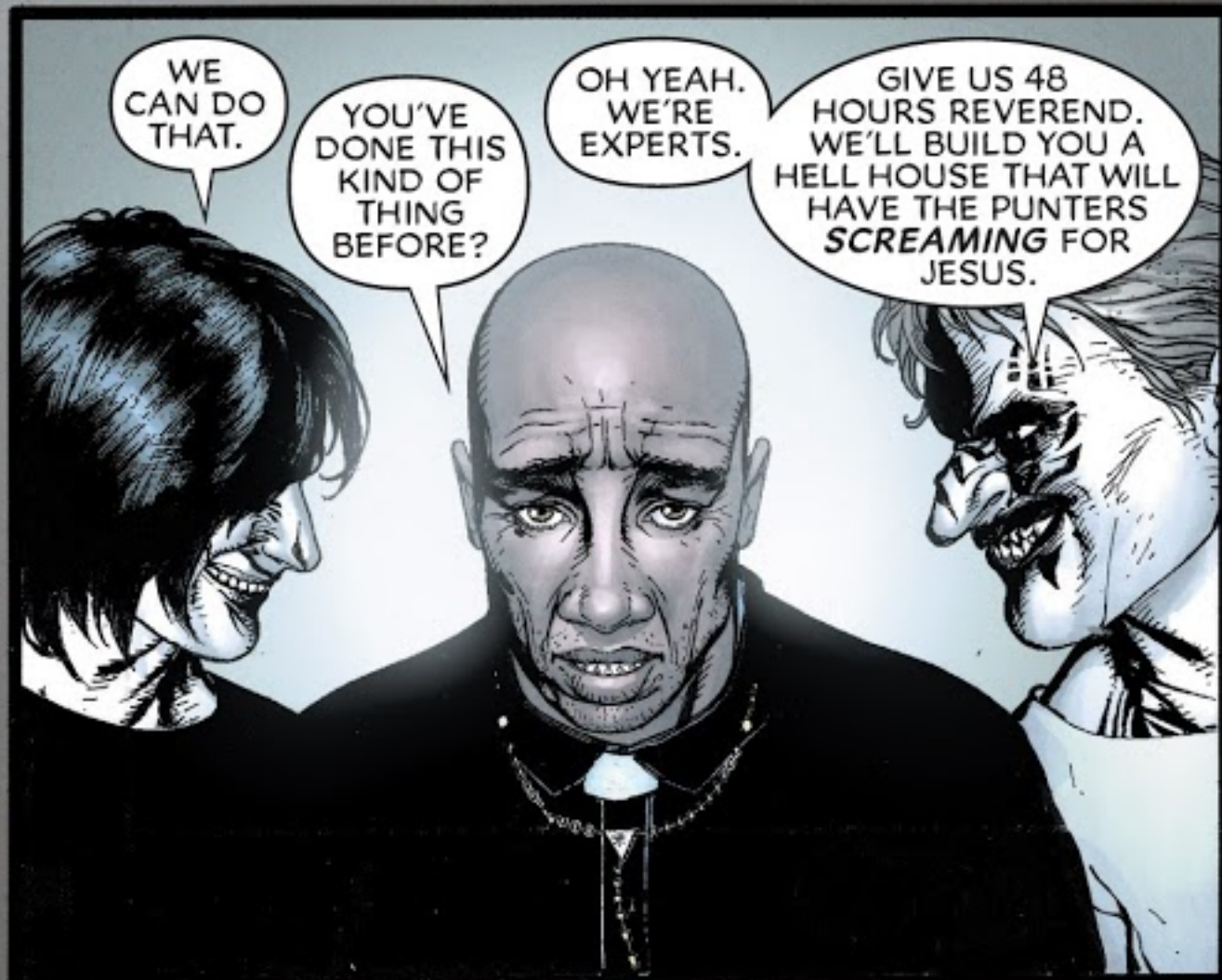
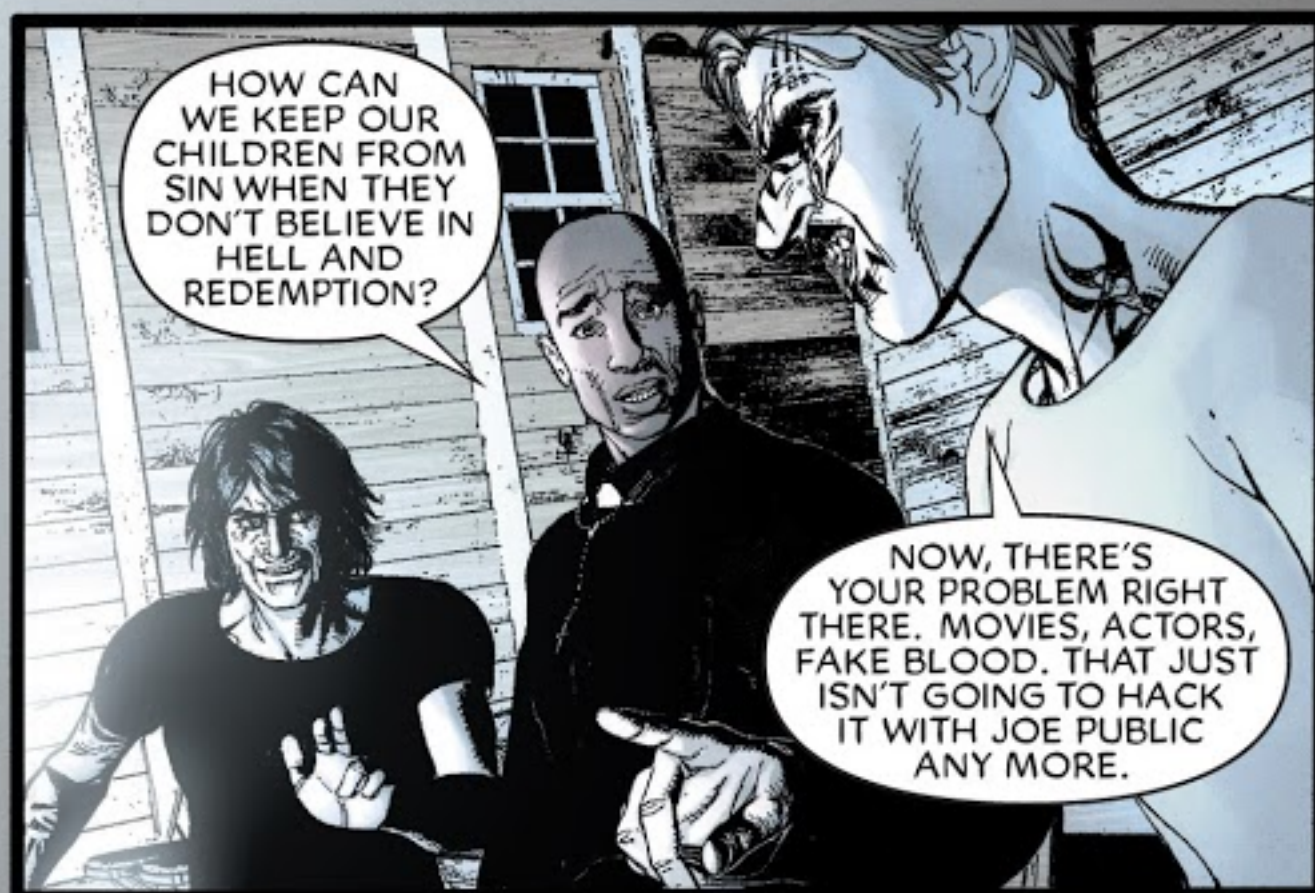


CREATURES
THAT FEED ON
THE CORRUPTION
OF THE BODY. BATS,
CROWS, SERPENTS,
SPIDERS, BUGS
LIKE THESE...

I SEE
THE WORLD
THROUGH THEIR
EYES.









D'YOU
THINK HE'S
GONNA BE
PISSED?



pffft!
IT'S NOT
LIKE WE'RE
BUILDING A
HIGHWAY
TO HELL
HERE.



THIS IS
JUST A NARROW
LITTLE PATH TO AN
OBSCURE CORNER OF
THE FURTHERMOST
BACKWATER OF THE
OUTER SUBURBS
OF HELL.



HE'S
GONNA BE
PISSED.



SCREW
HIM.
WHAT'S HE
GONNA DO
TO US?

SOME-
THING
REALLY
BAD?



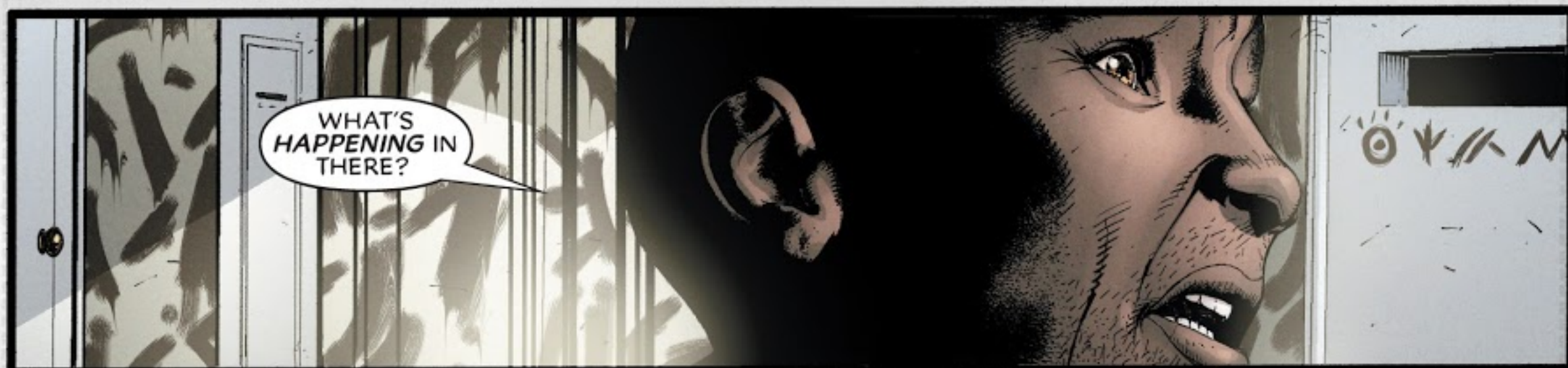
SO LEAVE.
RUN AWAY. YOU'RE
SO SCARED OF THE
BOGEYMAN, WHY
DON'T YOU STOP
RIGHT NOW?

YOU
KNOW
WHY.



I JUST
CAN'T HELP
MYSELF.









WHAT IS THAT?

HOW DID YOU DO THAT?

YOU WANTED PEOPLE TO BELIEVE THAT HELL IS *REAL*. WELL HERE IT IS, DOUCHE-BAG.

YOU'RE ON OUR TURF NOW. YOU JUST WALKED RIGHT INTO THE KINGDOM OF THE DAMNED.



WH-WHAT ARE YOU?

I GUESS THE APPEARANCE *IS* A LITTLE MISLEADING. WE KIND'A TOOK POSSESSION OF THESE TWO CORPSES A WHILE BACK.

I'M ABBADON. HE'S ZABRAXAS...

WE'RE DEMONS.



HEY REVEREND! YOU'RE HEADING THE WRONG WAY. EXIT IS-



-THAT WAY?



OH, CREEPING JESUS!

TOLD YOU HE'D BE PISS!







WANDA?



PLEASE,
DON'T
HIT ME
AGAIN.



TO BE CONTINUED...



HINE
HABERLIN

A TALE OF THREE BROTHERS
PART TWO: REMEMBRANCE

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Capullo



KROOAAA



WELL NOW, I WONDER.

ARE YOU THE ONE THAT SUMMONED HIM?



"WAS IT YOUR EYES HE SAW THROUGH?"

WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S WRONG?

ABBADON AND ZABRAXAS. THEY'RE MINOR DEMONS BUT THEY CAN BE A PAIN IN THE ASS.

IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE TRYING TO CREATE A RIFT IN THE BARRIER I CONSTRUCTED BETWEEN EARTH AND HELL.



IS SPAWN IN TROUBLE?

ONLY HE TOLD ME TO STAY OUT HERE AND NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES TO EVEN THINK ABOUT-



-OH THE HELL WITH IT.





NNNN-
A-A-
RRRR-G-
H-H

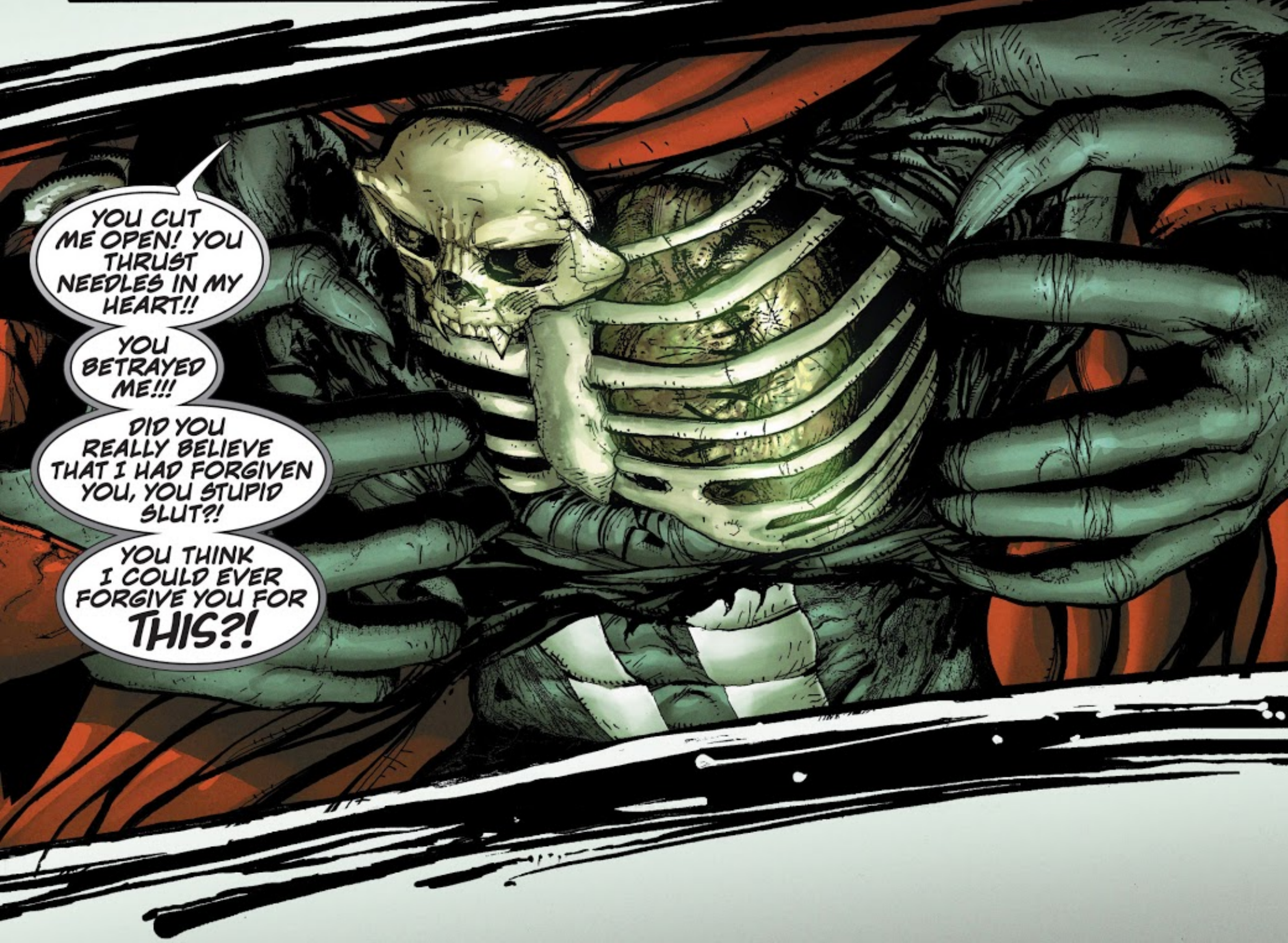
AL,
WHAT'S
HAPPENING?
ARE YOU ALL
RIGHT?



ALL
RIGHT?

ALL
RIGHT?!!

DO YOU
SEE HOW
YOU HURT
ME?



YOU CUT
ME OPEN! YOU
THRUST
NEEDLES IN MY
HEART!!

YOU
BETRAYED
ME!!!

DID YOU
REALLY BELIEVE
THAT I HAD FORGIVEN
YOU, YOU STUPID
SLUT?!

YOU THINK
I COULD EVER
FORGIVE YOU FOR
THIS?!







YOU LED ME FALSE, NIGHTBIRD! WHERE IS SPAWN?



LET ME GUESS.

YOU JOKERS MUST BE ABBADON AND ZABRAXAS.

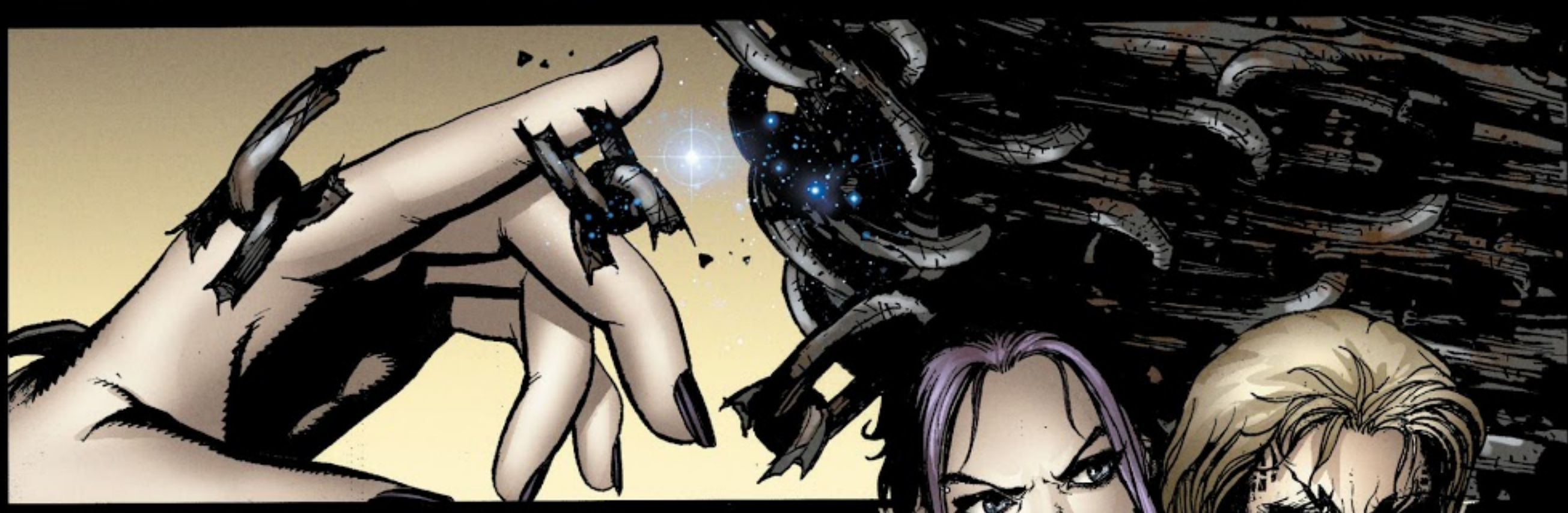
AB AND ZAB TO YOU, SWEETHEART. HE'S AB, I'M ZAB.

HEY, DOLL, YOU THINK YOU COULD GET US DOWN FROM HERE?



CALLING ME 'DOLL' DOESN'T ENTIRELY HELP YOUR CASE. BESIDES, THOSE ARE SPAWN'S CHAINS.

I COULDN'T FREE YOU IF I WANTED T-



OH.

HAH! HOW ABOUT THAT?

REAL COOL TRICK, SUGAR. YOU MIND USING THAT MAGIC TOUCH ON ME NOW?

I KNOW YOU'RE A DEMON AND I PROBABLY CAN'T KILL YOU, BUT SOMETHING TELLS ME I CAN CAUSE YOU A WHOLE WORLD OF PAIN IF I CUT YOU WITH THIS.

SO I SUGGEST YOU DO WHAT I ASK.

UH, LEMME GUESS. YOU'RE LOOKING FOR TALL DARK AND MOODY?



WANDA.
I'M SO SORRY
I HURT YOU. IF YOU
KNEW WHAT IT
COSTS ME...

CAN
YOU EVER
FORGIVE
ME?

I PLEDGED MYSELF TO
YOU FOREVER. NO MATTER
WHAT YOU'VE DONE.

OF COURSE
I FORGIVE YOU.
COME ...



...KISS
ME, MY
LOVE.



AL! GET
AWAY FROM
HER!

THAT
ISN'T
WANDA.

S-S-S-S-S-S-S-S-A-A-A-A-



SHE'S
JEALOUS-S-S.
S-S-SHE WANTS-S-S
YOU FOR
HERS-S-S-ELF.



REVEAL
YOURSELF,
MONSTER!

NOOO!

S-S-S-O-O-O
M-U-U-U-C-H TO
S-S-S-S-
S-A-A-V-V-O-R

FIGHT
ITAL! IT'S
KILLING
YOU!

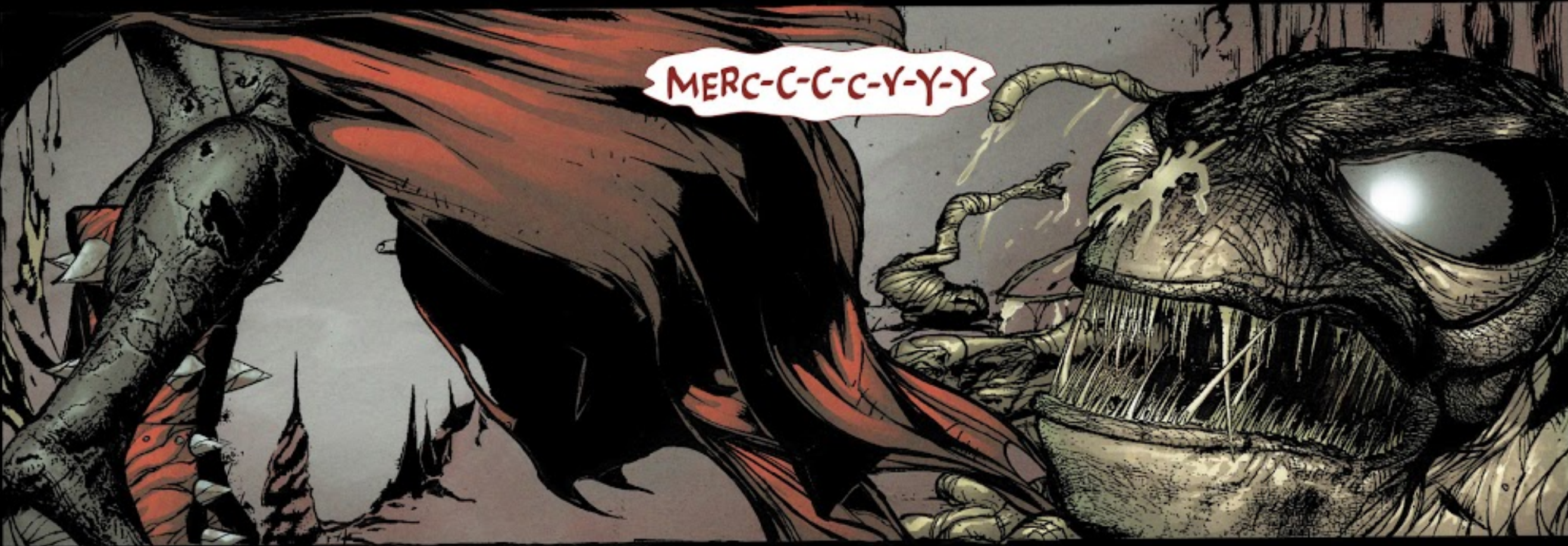
THIS
ONE MAKES
ME S-S-S-
STR-O-
ONG!

THIS-S-S ONE
BEARS-S-S-S THE S-
S-S-S-I-N-S-S OF
THE WORLD!

LET ME
F-E-E-E-E-D-D.
LET ME GORGE
MYSELF ON YOUR
S-S-S-S-SWEET
M-I-S-S-SERY!







R-A-A-W-W-W-R-R-R!!!

NO
MERCY.







HAVE YOU
EATEN YOUR
FILL,
VERMIN?

A-H-H-H-H-H
THIS-S-S-S ONE
S-S-ST-T-INKS-S-S
OF S-S-S-IN.

THIS-S-S ONE
CR-A-A-AVE-S-S
ABS-S-S-OLUTION.

COME TO
M-M-M-M-
E-E-E-



YOU'VE FED
ON YOUR LAST
VICTIM, YOU SCUM
SUCKING SHIT!

NOW
YOU'RE
GOING
TO SHOW
ME.

UKKKKK!



I WANT TO SEE
WHAT YOUR SINS
LOOK LIKE.





MW-U-U
MWW-U-U-
U



MUH-
MWW-
A-A-A-
A-A



WWW-
A-A-A-
A-A



SQUURRT



S-S-
SPARE
THEM
HELLS-S-
S-SPAWN-
N-N

THEY
ARE WITHOUT
S-S-S-
S-I-I-NN



THEN
LET'S KEEP
IT THAT
WAY.



AAW
WW
WW
K
K-K
K

SQU-
U-E-E-
EE-E

SQU-
U-EEE-
E-E-
E-E







YOUR
BROTHER?!



YOU
HEAR THAT?
IT'S YOUR
BROTHER AL,
COME TO
SEE YOU.

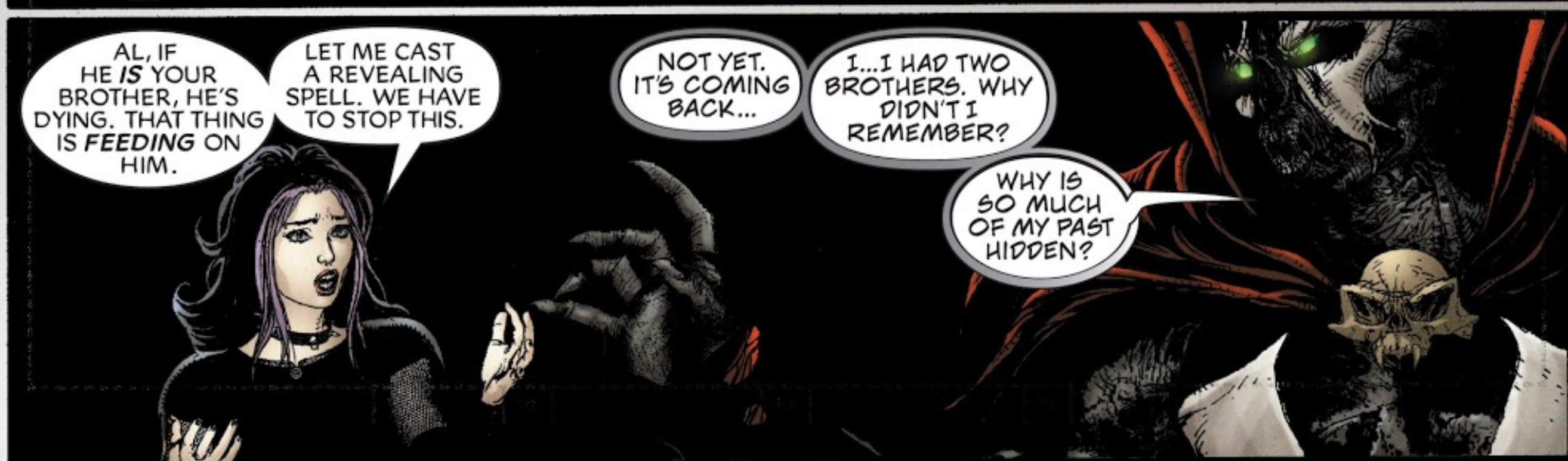


AL DIED. HE
DIED. YEARS AGO. THEY
KILLED HIM.

AH,
BUT THE DEAD
DON'T ALWAYS
STAY DEAD DO
THEY?



SOMETIMES
THE DEAD
COME BACK.



AL, IF
HE *IS* YOUR
BROTHER, HE'S
DYING. THAT THING
IS *FEEDING* ON
HIM.

LET ME CAST
A REVEALING
SPELL. WE HAVE
TO STOP THIS.

NOT YET.
IT'S COMING
BACK...

I...I HAD TWO
BROTHERS. WHY
DIDN'T I
REMEMBER?

WHY IS
SO MUCH
OF MY PAST
HIDDEN?



YE-S-S-S.
THERE WERE THREE
BROTHERS. THE S-S-
S-SIMMONS-S-S
BOY-S-S. MARC, AL,
RICHARD.

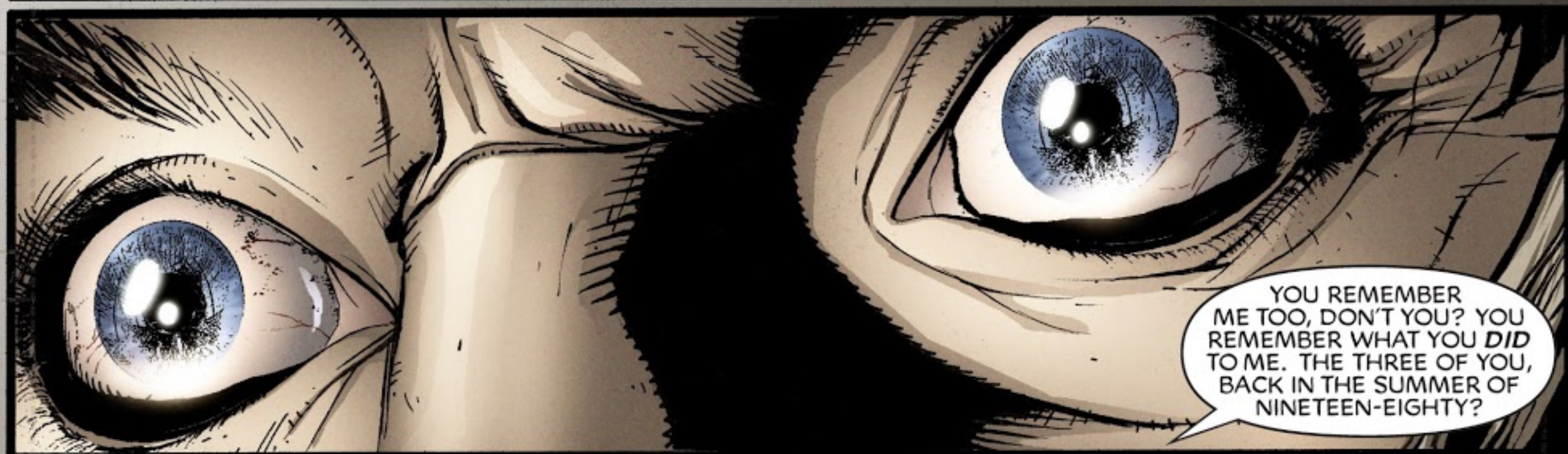
S-S-S-UCH
G-O-O-OD BOYS.
SUCH BRIGHT
FUTURE-S-S-
S-S.



BUT IT ALL
WENT WRONG
DIDN'T IT?



IT ALL WENT
SO HORRIBLY
WRONG.



YOU REMEMBER
ME TOO, DON'T YOU? YOU
REMEMBER WHAT YOU *DID*
TO ME. THE THREE OF YOU,
BACK IN THE SUMMER OF
NINETEEN-EIGHTY?



AL,
WHAT'S HE
TALKING ABOUT?
WHAT DID YOU
DO?

WE...
OH SWEET
JESUS...

...WE
MURDERED
HIM.

NEXT: A TALE OF THREE BROTHERS





HINE
HABERLIN

A TALE OF THREE BROTHERS
PART THREE: SINS PAST

SPAWN



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DO YOU BELIEVE IN MAGIC?



THIS WOMAN DOES. SHE HAS TO...

A LONG TIME AGO, A MAGICIAN CAST A SPELL ON HER.



NOW SHE CAN NEVER LEAVE THIS HOUSE.

DAMN' KIDS WITH THEIR NOISE.



THINK FAST, JAY!



THE PICKET FENCE MARKS THE BOUNDARY OF HER WORLD.



I SUPPOSE YOU'LL BE WANTING YOUR BALL BACK.



SHE CAN SEE THROUGH THE BARRIER THE MAGICIAN PUT AROUND HER...

...BUT NO ONE CAN SEE IN...

WHERE THE HELL DID IT GO?

@\$!!
MAN, YOU THREW IT.
SHEE-IT!



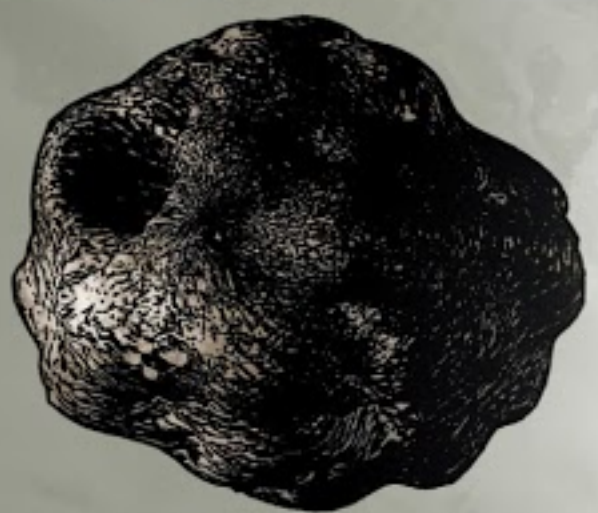
NO ONE CAN HEAR HER.

YOU WATCH YOUR MOUTH YOUNG MAN. THERE'S A LADY PRESENT.

IT JUST DISAPPEARED. LIKE POP! INTO SOME OTHER DIMENSION.

THAT'S LIKE, SOME REAL WEIRD SCI-FI SHIT THERE.

DON'T YOU IGNORE ME!



I WILL NOT BE IGNORED!

SOMETIMES SHE HAS TO DO SOMETHING JUST TO PROVE SHE STILL EXISTS...



AAAAH!!



JODIE, HE
AIN'T
MOVING!

WE NEED AN
AMBULANCE!
MY HOMEY'S
HURT BAD!



I'M STILL
HERE!
YOU HEAR
ME?!



I'M
STILL
HERE.

THE MAGICIAN LEFT SOME FLAWS IN HIS
BARRIER. THE RAIN STILL GETS THROUGH,
ALONG WITH THE BALLS AND THE OTHER
JUNK THE CHILDREN THROW INTO HER
YARD. BUT IT HAS BEEN A LONG HOT
SUMMER AND IT HASN'T RAINED IN WEEKS.

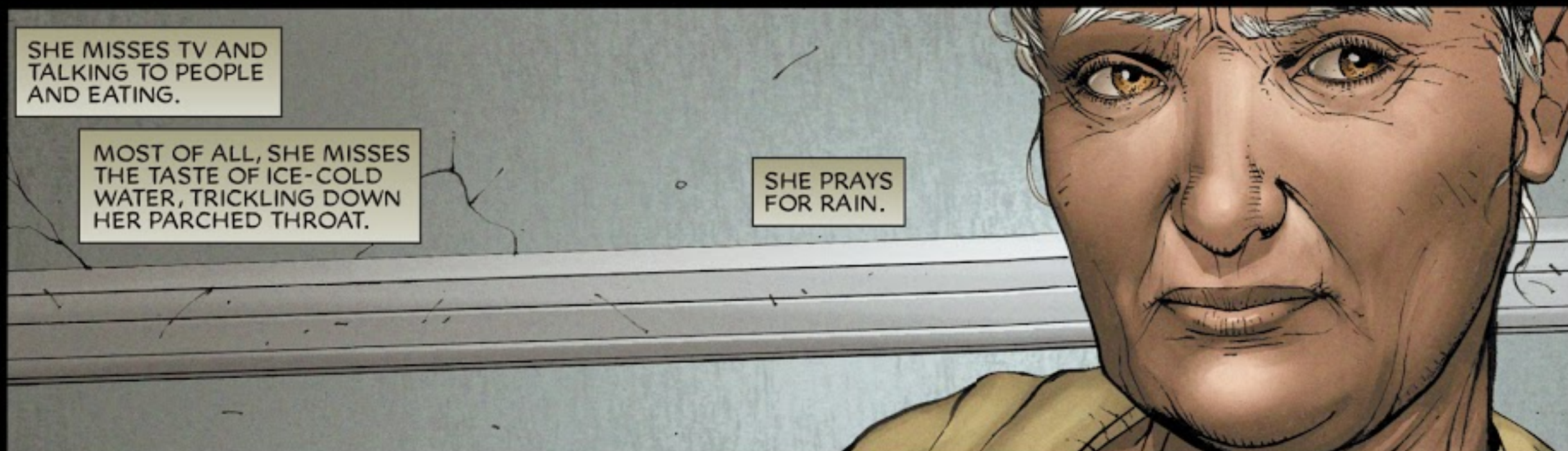


RAIN, FOOTBALLS,
A BIRD OR TWO...



...BUT NO TV SIGNALS.

SHE WONDERS WHAT
HER HUSBAND SEES
WHEN HE GAZES AT
THE BLANK TV SCREEN
FOR ENDLESS HOURS
AS THE MONTHS AND
YEARS GO BY.





RICHIE!
IT'S ME.
IT'S AL.

HUH?
AL?



OH, SWEET
LORD, IS IT
REALLY YOU?
THE DEVIL GOT
HOLD OF YOU
DIDN'T HE?

YOU SHOULD
HAVE REPENTED,
LIKE ME. YOU SHOULD
HAVE GIVEN YOURSELF
TO GOD'S MERCY.



HALLELUJAH!
YOU TELL HIM,
SON.

RICHIE. WHAT
HAPPENED THAT
SUMMER?



YOU DON'T HAVE
MUCH TIME. THAT THING
IS FEEDING ON YOUR
BROTHER.

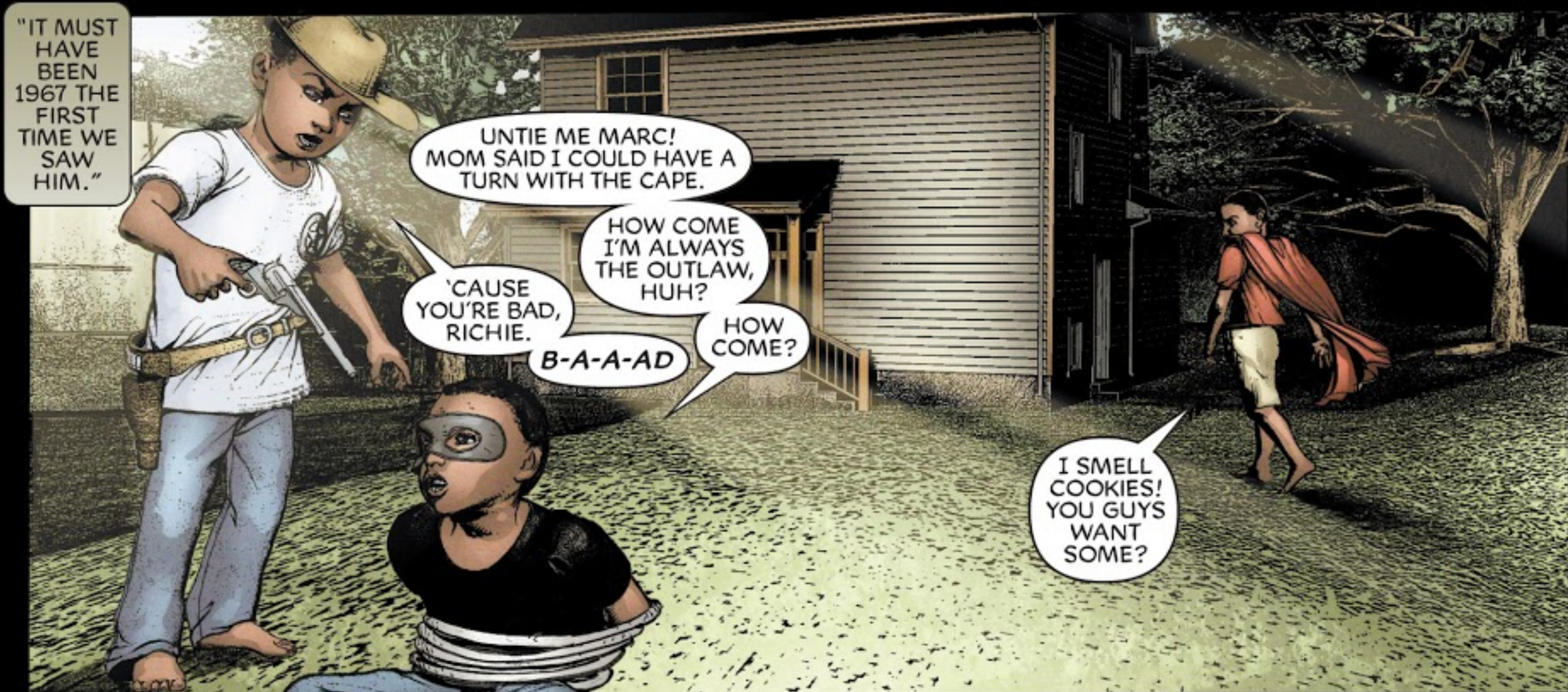
JUST A LITTLE
LONGER, NYX.
I NEED HIM TO
REMEMBER.

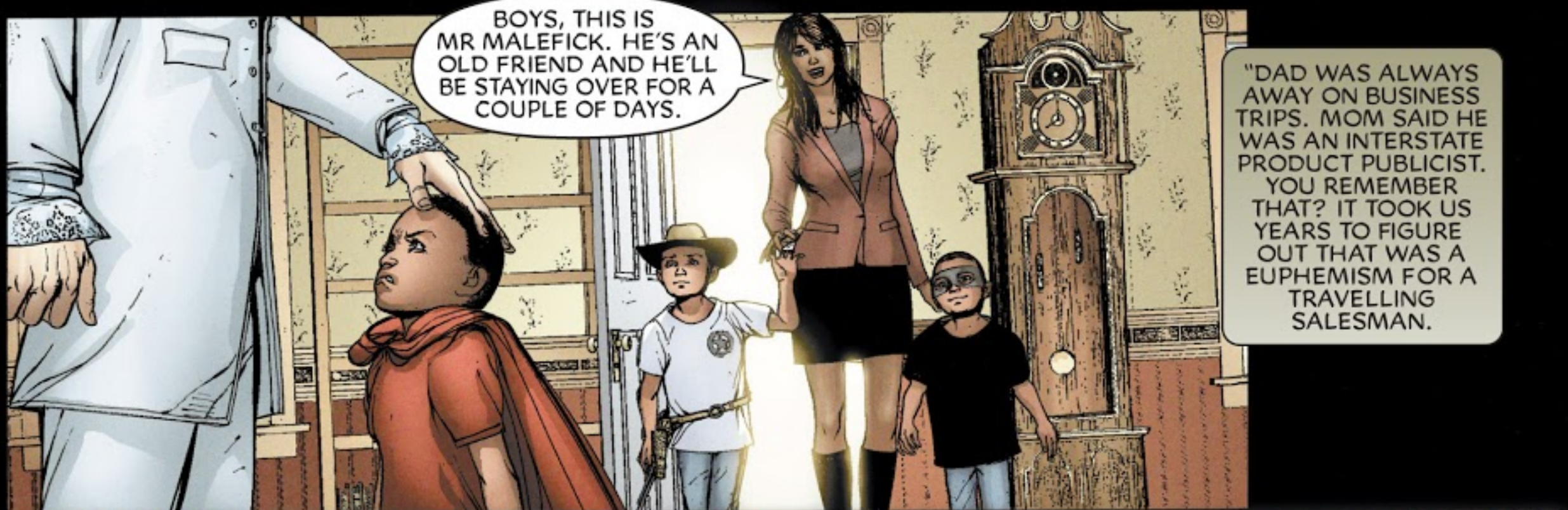
GO AHEAD,
RICHARD. TELL
HIM...



...REMIND
HIM HOW YOU
BUTCHERED
ME.

IT-IT'S
COMING BACK.
BUT IT STARTED
WAY BEFORE
THAT, WHEN THE
MAN IN WHITE
CAME TO THE
HOUSE.





BOYS, THIS IS MR MALEFICK. HE'S AN OLD FRIEND AND HE'LL BE STAYING OVER FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS.

"DAD WAS ALWAYS AWAY ON BUSINESS TRIPS. MOM SAID HE WAS AN INTERSTATE PRODUCT PUBLICIST. YOU REMEMBER THAT? IT TOOK US YEARS TO FIGURE OUT THAT WAS A EUPHEMISM FOR A TRAVELLING SALESMAN."



"YOU WALKED RIGHT UP TO MALEFICK. YOU WEREN'T SCARED OF ANYTHING OR ANYBODY."

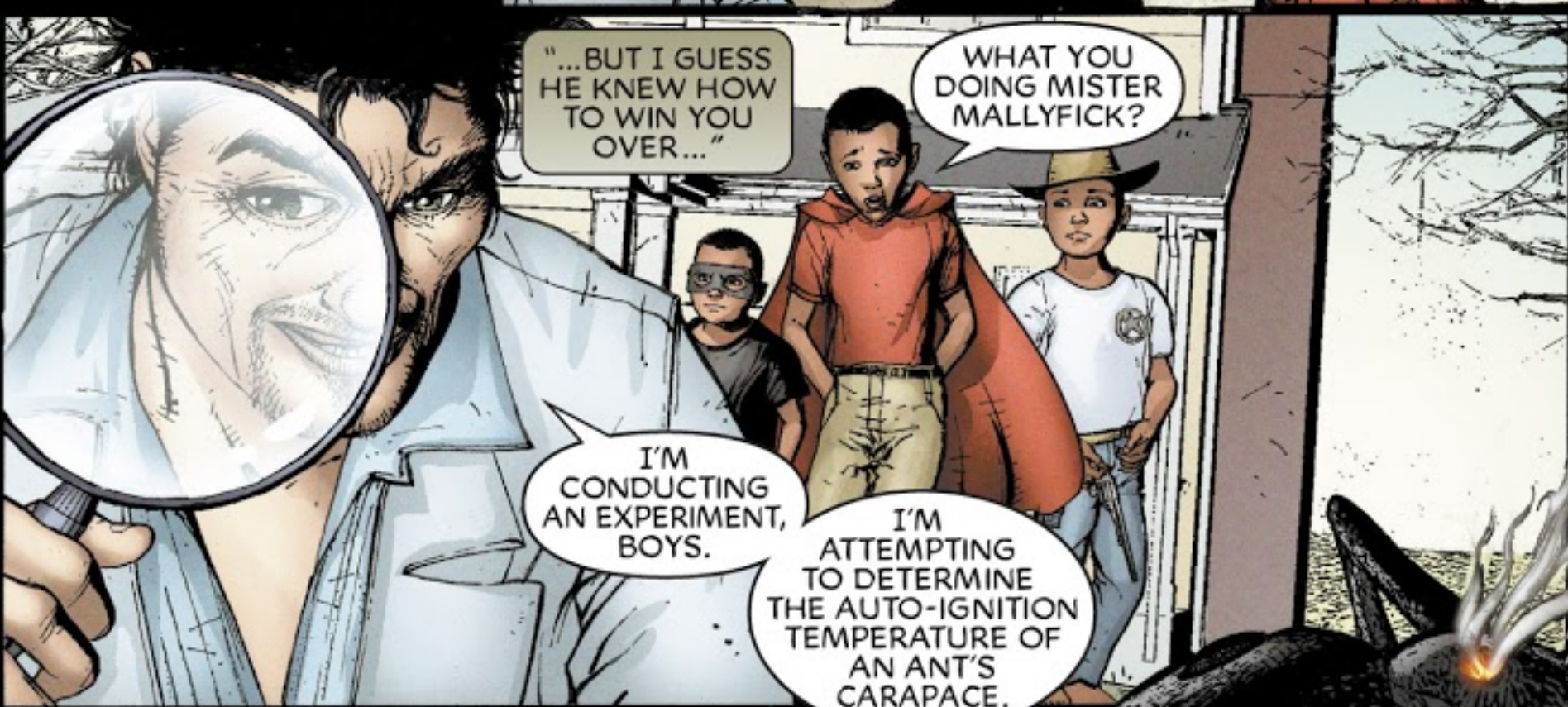
SO IF YOU'RE SUCH GOOD FRIENDS, HOW COME WE NEVER SEEN YOU BEFORE?



AL! DON'T BE RUDE!

WE'VE BEEN OUT OF TOUCH, BUT I KNOW MR MALEFICK FROM WAY BACK. WHEN I WAS A STUDENT...

"YOU REALLY DIDN'T LIKE HIM THAT FIRST DAY..."



"...BUT I GUESS HE KNEW HOW TO WIN YOU OVER..."

WHAT YOU DOING MISTER MALLYFICK?

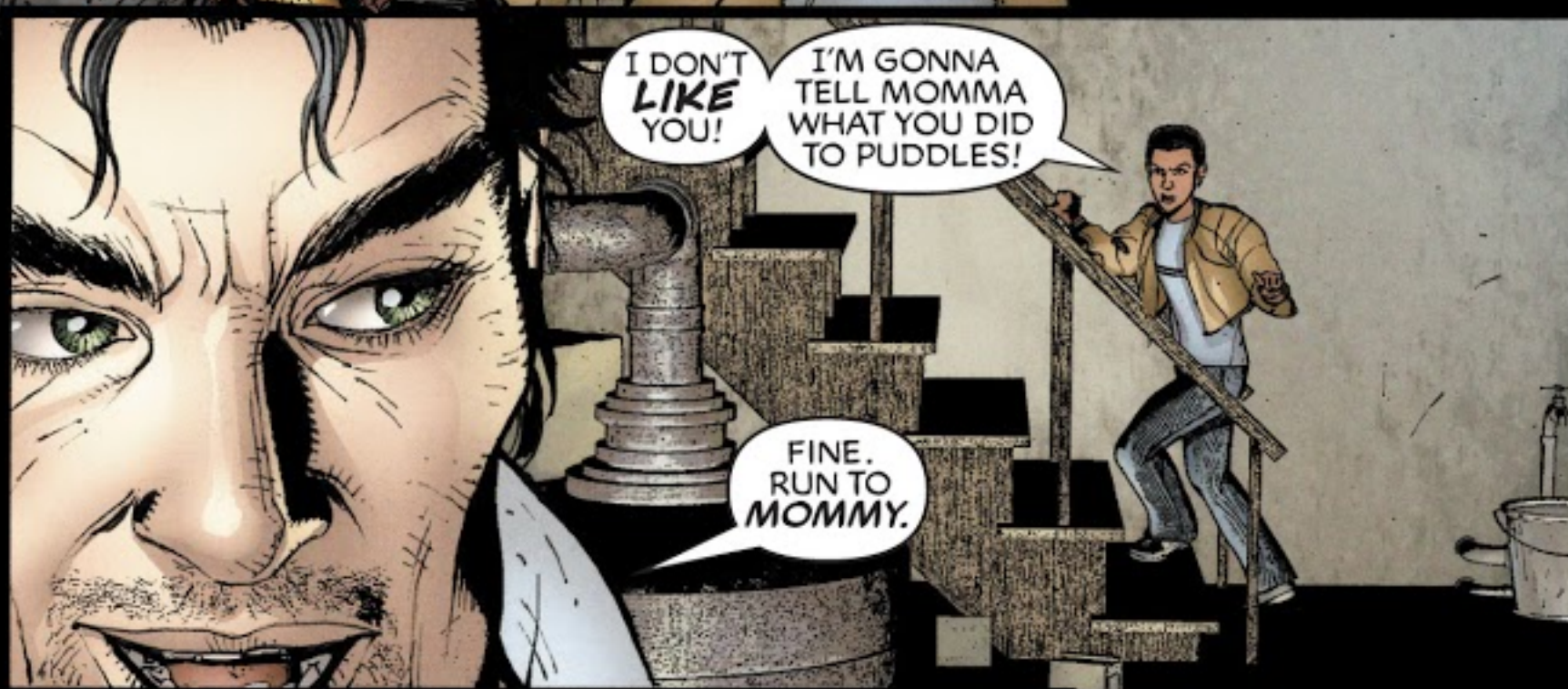
I'M CONDUCTING AN EXPERIMENT, BOYS.

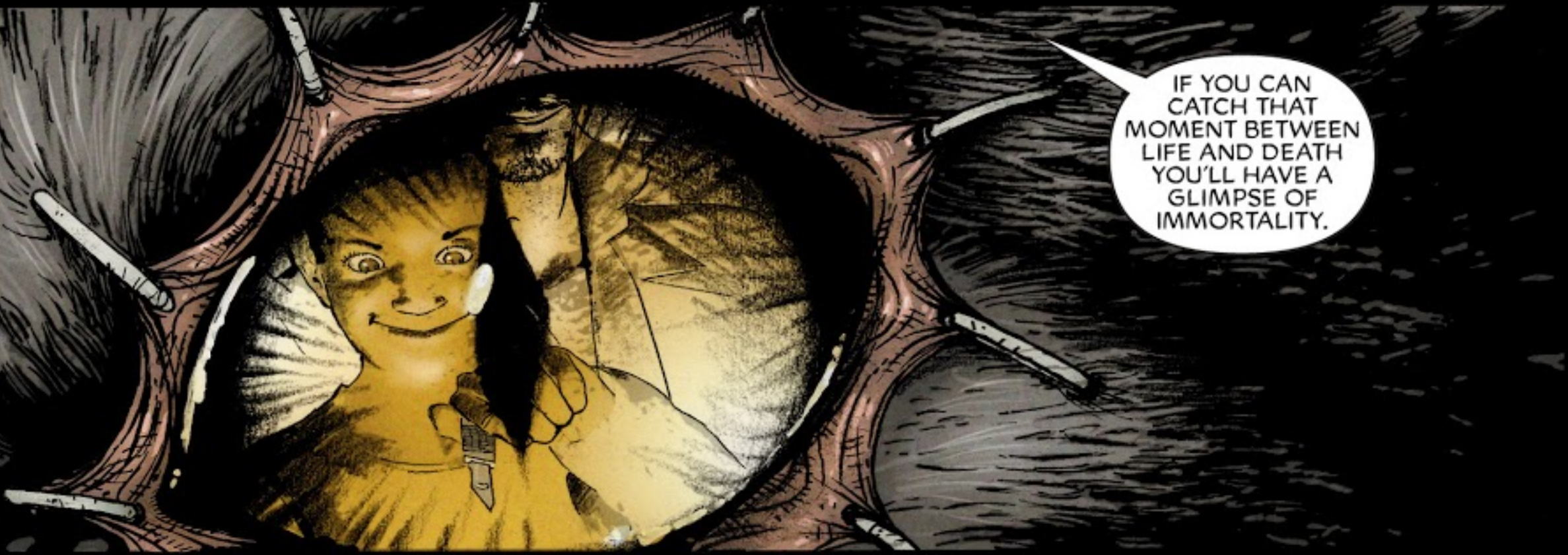
I'M ATTEMPTING TO DETERMINE THE AUTO-IGNITION TEMPERATURE OF AN ANT'S CARAPACE.

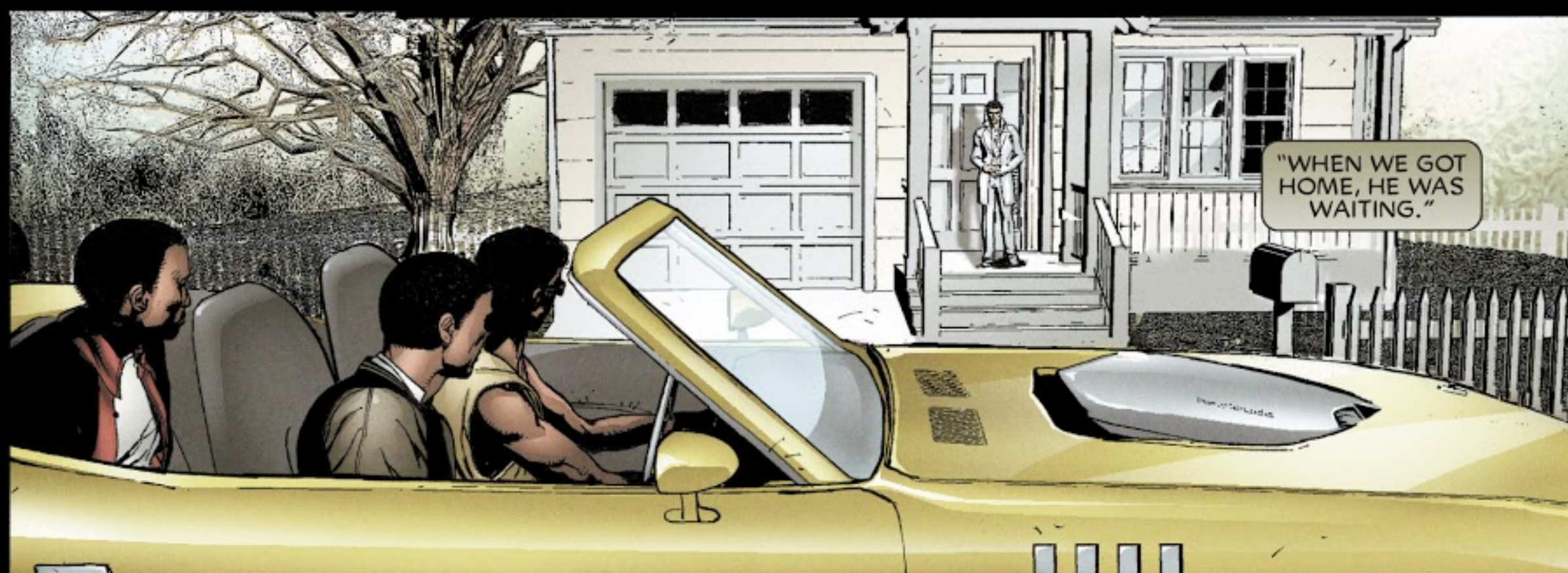












"POPPA WAS ON THE ROAD THAT SUMMER AND MALEFICK SEEMED TO HAVE MOVED IN FOR THE DURATION. WE WOULD HEAR HIM PACING RESTLESSLY DURING THE NIGHT AND WE GUESSED HE MUST SLEEP BY DAY... IF HE SLEPT AT ALL..."

MOMMA, I'M GOING TO TELL POP ABOUT MISTER MALEFICK.

NO! YOU CAN'T!

IT'S NOT RIGHT HIM BEING HERE. IT'S NEVER BEEN RIGHT. SLEEPING UNDER POPPA'S ROOF. HOW COULD YOU-?

PLEASE, MARC. IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU-

"WHEN AL LOOKED AT MARC, WE ALL SAW IT. SOMETHING COLD IN HIS EYES."

DON'T WORRY MOM, MARC ISN'T GOING TO SAY ANYTHING. MARC'S GOING TO MIND HIS BUSINESS.

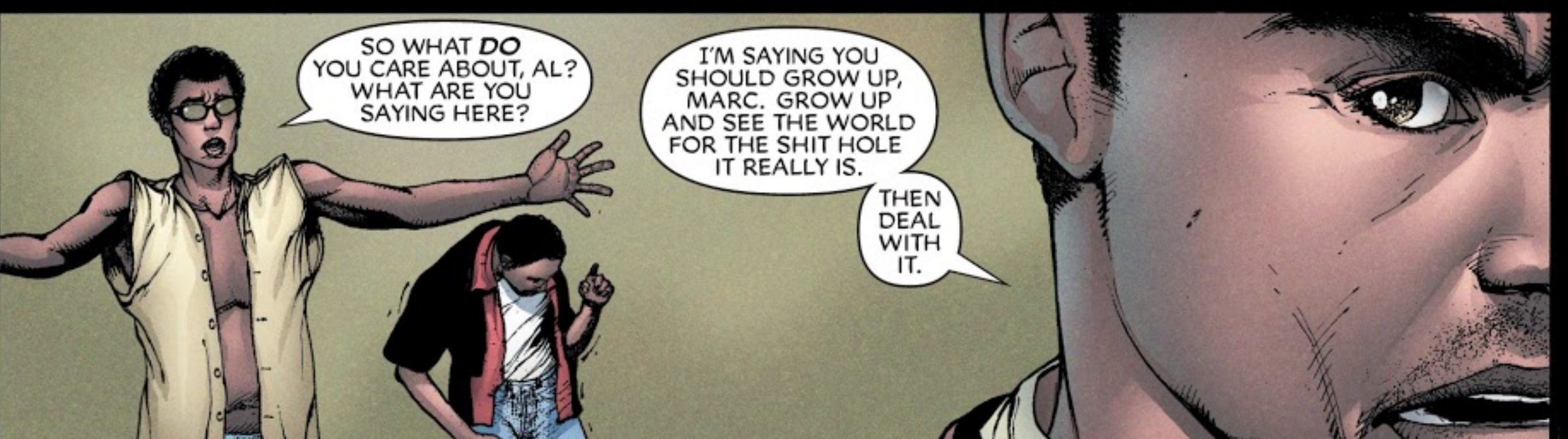
"FUNNY THING IS, MISTER MALEFICK DIDN'T SEEM SO INTERESTED IN AL THIS TIME. IT SEEMED LIKE I WAS HIS FAVORITE."

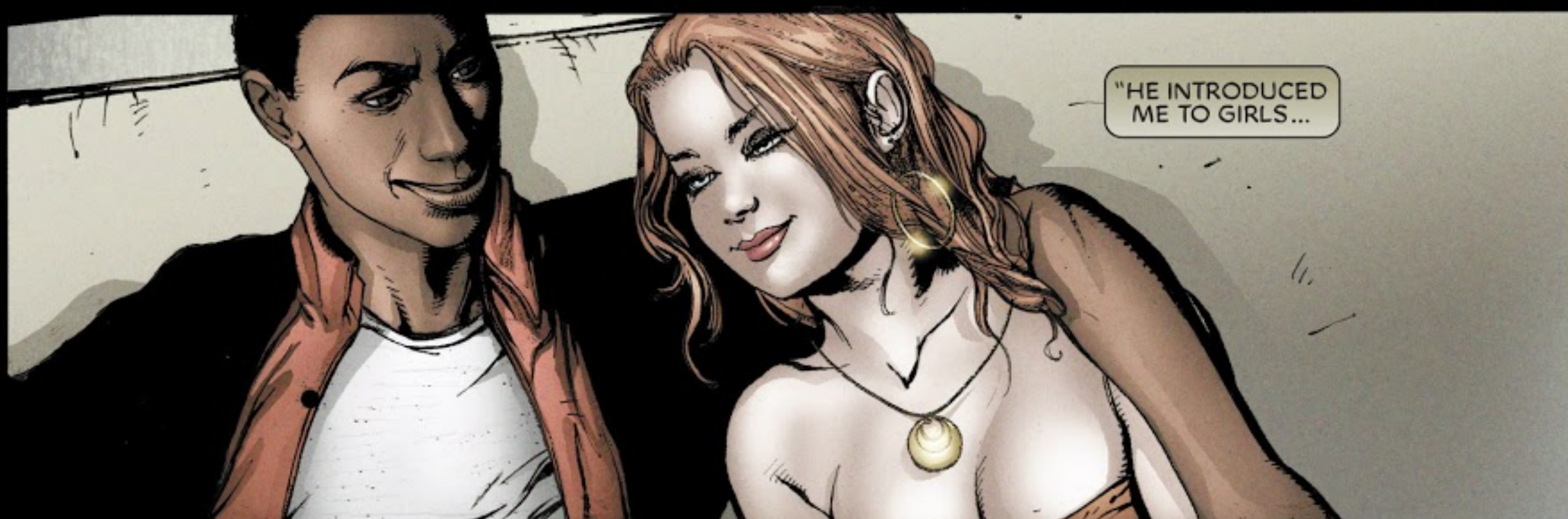
TELL ME RICHARD, HAVE YOU EVER USED DRUGS?

WHAT? NUH-NO. OF COURSE NOT.

REALLY? PITY. I'M QUITE PARTIAL TO THE OCCASIONAL HIT OF COCAINE.

I WAS HOPING YOU MIGHT JOIN ME.





"I DIDN'T SEE WHAT MALEFICK WAS DOING. HE HAD THE WHOLE THING MAPPED OUT AND I WALKED THE LINE FOR HIM."



RICHIE, I WANT YOU TO DO SOMETHING FOR ME. I NEED YOU TO PICK UP A PACKAGE FROM THE WEASEL.

SURE, NO PROBLEM.



THAT'S A DANGEROUS NEIGHBORHOOD DOWN THERE. YOU SHOULD TAKE SOME PROTECTION WITH YOU.

JUST IN CASE...



"THE TRAP WAS SET BUT IT WASN'T ME MALEFICK WAS AFTER. I WAS JUST THE BAIT."

WHAT?!
CALM DOWN, RICHIE. JUST CHILL AND TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON.

GIMME THAT.



RICHIE? WHAT'S UP?

HE'S HIGH. HE'S TALKING CRAZY SHIT.

STAY THERE! DON'T MOVE! DON'T DO ANYTHING!

I'M ON MY WAY!



WHAT HAPPENED?

RICHIE SCREWED THE POOCH IS WHAT HAPPENED.





I WOKE UP,
HE WAS... HE HAD
HIS HANDS ON ME. IT
WAS TOO CREEPY, AL.
HE WAS *DOING*
STUFF.

THEN
THE KNIFE
WAS IN MY
HAND...



UKK-
UKK



DON'T
TOUCH THE
KNIFE. YOU
PULL IT OUT,
HE'LL BLEED
FASTER.

I KNOW.
I KNOW
THAT.

HE'S BAD.
WE GOTTA CALL
AN AMBULANCE.
HE'S GONNA DIE
ON US.



WE CALL
AN AMBULANCE.
THEY CALL THE
COPS.

WE COULD
LEAVE AND THEN
CALL AN
AMBULANCE.



PEOPLE
SAW US COME HERE.
RICHIE'S PRINTS ARE ON
THE KNIFE. CHRIST, HIS
PRINTS MUST BE ALL OVER.
THE COPS WILL PICK US UP.
THEY'LL TEST RICHIE
FOR DOPE.

OH, GOD.
OH GOD. THIS
ISN'T FAIR...

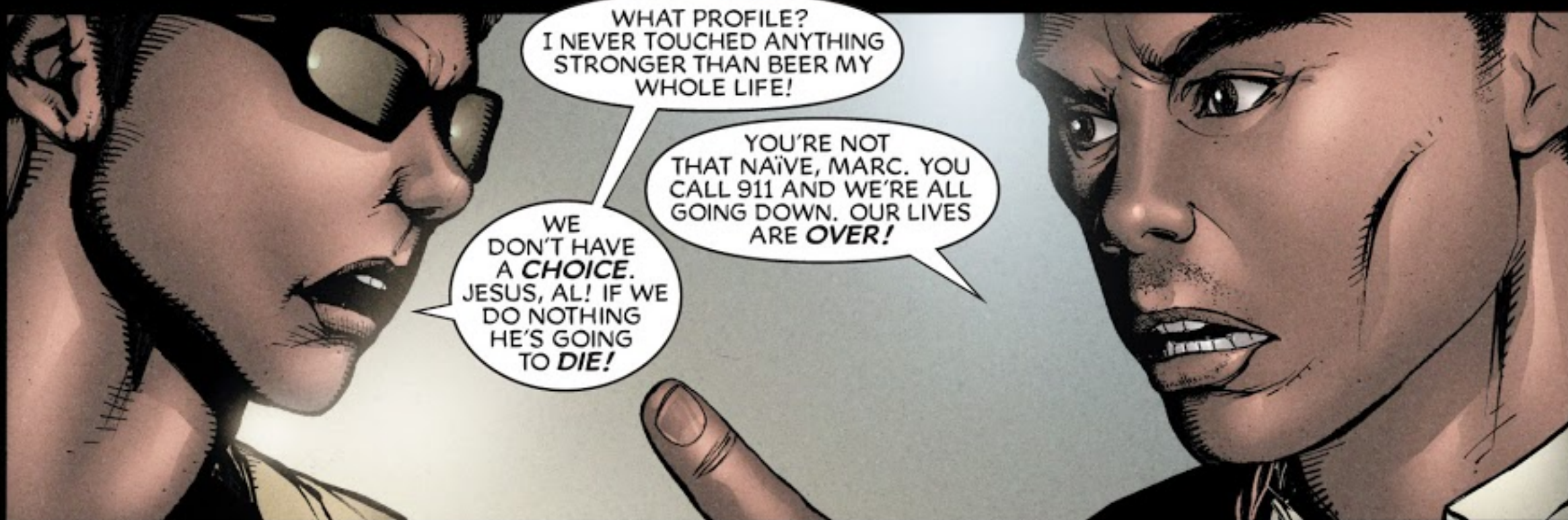


WE'LL TELL THE TRUTH. THE GUY'S A JUNKIE. HE WAS MOLESTING RICHIE. RICHIE'S A MINOR. HE WAS DEFENDING HIMSELF.

THAT KNIFE CAME FROM OUR KITCHEN. HE BROUGHT A *KNIFE* WITH HIM. THAT'S PREMEDITATED.

HE'S BEEN USING HEROIN AND WE'RE HIS BROTHERS. YOU KNOW HOW THEY'LL READ IT. WE CAME TO SCORE, GOT INTO A FIGHT OVER A DEAL. WHATEVER.

LOOK AT US, MARC. WE LOOK LIKE DOPE DEALERS. WE FIT THE PROFILE.



WHAT PROFILE? I NEVER TOUCHED ANYTHING STRONGER THAN BEER MY WHOLE LIFE!

YOU'RE NOT THAT NAÏVE, MARC. YOU CALL 911 AND WE'RE ALL GOING DOWN. OUR LIVES ARE *OVER!*

WE DON'T HAVE A *CHOICE*. JESUS, AL! IF WE DO NOTHING HE'S GOING TO *DIE!*



I GUESS THAT'S THE DILEMMA.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO... YOU SAID NOT TO PULL THE KNIFE OUT.



UNNNGGGGH!

AL! DON'T! DON'T DO THIS!

"I KNEW THEN,
LOOKING AT YOU
WITH THE KNIFE IN
YOUR HAND, I
KNEW... EVERYTHING
WE COULD HAVE
BEEN... ALL THE
POSSIBILITIES...
EVERYTHING ENDED
RIGHT THERE."





HA-A-A-A

"IT WAS LIKE WITH THE CAT. YOU LOOKED INTO HIS EYES."



"DID YOU SEE IT? DID YOU **SEE** THE MOMENT WHEN HIS SPIRIT LEFT HIM?"



"I GUESS YOU DID, BECAUSE SUDDENLY **HE** WAS THERE."

AT LAST IT TRULY BEGINS. I'VE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR THIS. I'VE WANDERED THROUGH THE CENTURIES, SEARCHING FOR THE ONE WHO WOULD GIVE ME DOMINION OVER THIS WORLD.



A STRONG MAN. A MAN WHO CAN LOOK INTO THE FACE OF DEATH, WITH NEITHER FEAR NOR JOY IN HIS HEART.



THE
FIRST TIME
I SAW YOU, I
KNEW IT
WOULD BE
YOU!

TO BE CONTINUED...





HINE
HABERLIN

SPAWN®

A TALE OF THREE BROTHERS
PART FOUR: SECRETS AND LIES



ISSUE 173 DIGITAL EDITION

SPAWN.COM

Capullo



I ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT BEFORE I DIED AND BECAME A HELLSPAWN, I WAS A GOOD PERSON. NOT A SAINT, BUT DEFINITELY ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS.

THAT'S WHAT KEPT ME SANE.

BUT EVERYTHING I DISCOVER ABOUT MYSELF TELLS ME I'M WRONG. ALL MY MEMORIES WERE FALSE.

I ABUSED WANDA...



... AND WHEN I WAS NINETEEN YEARS OLD, I COMMITTED COLD-BLOODED MURDER.

THE HELL HOUSE. ILLINOIS.

HE SAID YOU WERE THE CHOSEN ONE. THE ONE HE'D BEEN WAITING FOR.

MALEFICK WAS THE DEVIL WASN'T HE? HE MUST HAVE BEEN. LOOK WHAT HE MADE YOU INTO.

NO, RICHARD. MALEFICK'S TRUE NAME IS MAMMON AND I'M AFRAID HE'S FAR WORSE THAN THE DEVIL.



IT'S MY FAULT THIS HAPPENED TO YOU. HE USED ME TO GET TO YOU. HE KNEW I WAS WEAK.

YESSSSSS. THE GUILT ISSSSS ALL YOURSSSS.

AL, THAT CREATURE IS KILLING YOUR BROTHER! I'M GOING TO STOP THIS NOW!

REVEAL YOUR TRUE FORM!





JUSSST A
LITTLE
MORRRRE

PLEASE,
DON'T STOP IT.
THIS IS NOT AN
EVIL CREATURE. IT'S
ABSOVING ME.
I CAN FEEL MY
SINS WASHING
AWAY.

THAT'S
ENOUGH!
LET HIM
GO!

THE LUSH AROMA
OF EVIL ISSS ON YOUR BREATH
HELLSSPAWN. YOU HAVE COMMITTED
EVERY VILE ACT THE HUMAN MIND
CAN IMAGINE, BUT I TELL
YOU THISSS...

...YOUR
GREATEST
SIN IS YET
TO COME.

SO
YOU TELL
FORTUNES
TOO?



DID
YOU SEE
THIS
COMING!?



HOW IS HE?

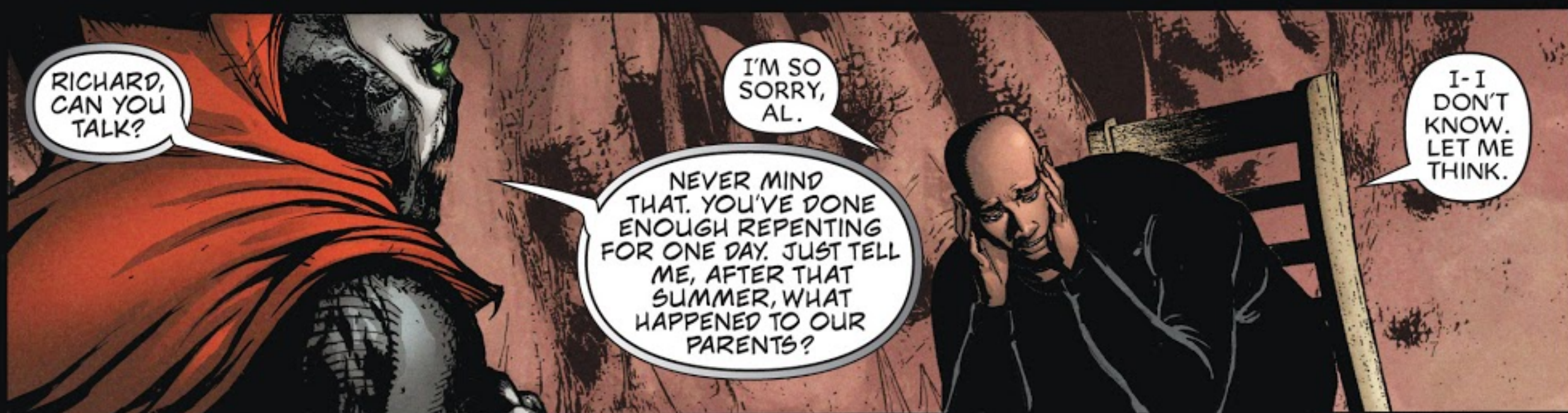
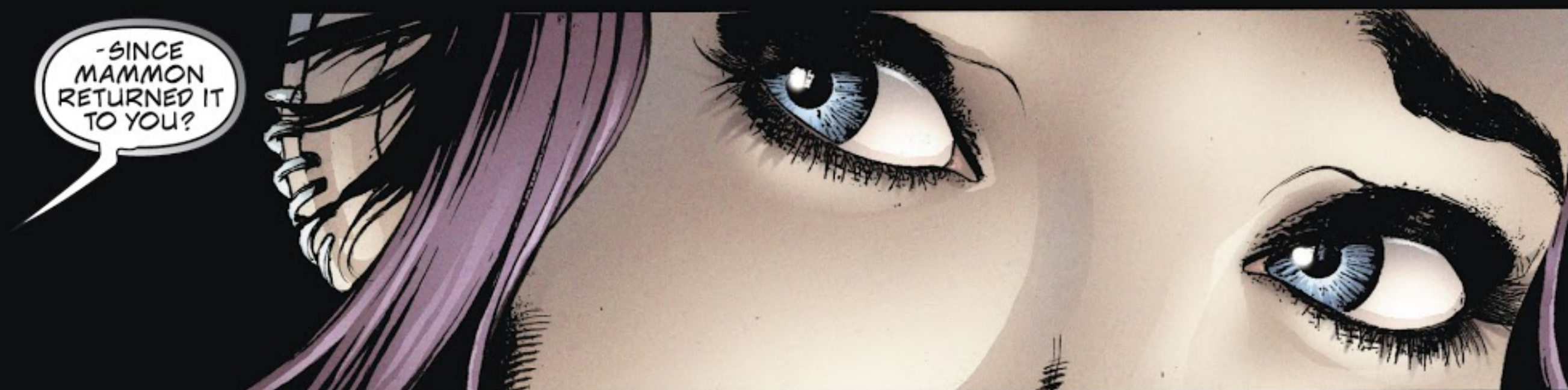
WEAK. THAT THING SUCKED ALL THE ENERGY OUT OF HIM. I CAN FEEL HIS HEART FLUTTERING LIKE A TRAPPED BIRD.

I'LL NEED TO CAST A HEALING SPELL.



BLESSED ACHELOIS, I SUMMON THEE, FROM THE SHADOWS OF THE NIGHT. TRANSFORM THIS SPIRIT'S DARKEST HOUR INTO PUREST HEALING LIGHT. BY THE POWER OF THE LADY, BY THE POWER OF THREE, AS I DO WILL IT, SO MOTE IT BE

HAA-A-A-H-H-H





I KNOW THAT! THAT'S NOT WHAT I ASKED.

I WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR MOTHER AND FATHER.

I DON'T KNOW. I- I NEVER HEARD FROM THEM. I'VE NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT THEM. NOT ONCE IN ALL THESE YEARS.



MAMMON DID THIS TO US. HE BLOCKED ALL OUR MEMORIES. STOPPED US FROM EVEN THINKING ABOUT OUR CHILDHOOD OR OUR PARENTS. HE WANTED US TO FORGET THEY EVER EXISTED.

I'M GOING HOME, NYX. I HAVE TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM.



AB, ZAB, YOU TWO ARE GOING TO CLOSE THESE PORTALS.

PERMANENTLY.

THEN YOU ARE GOING TO WAIT RIGHT HERE.

YES, SIR.

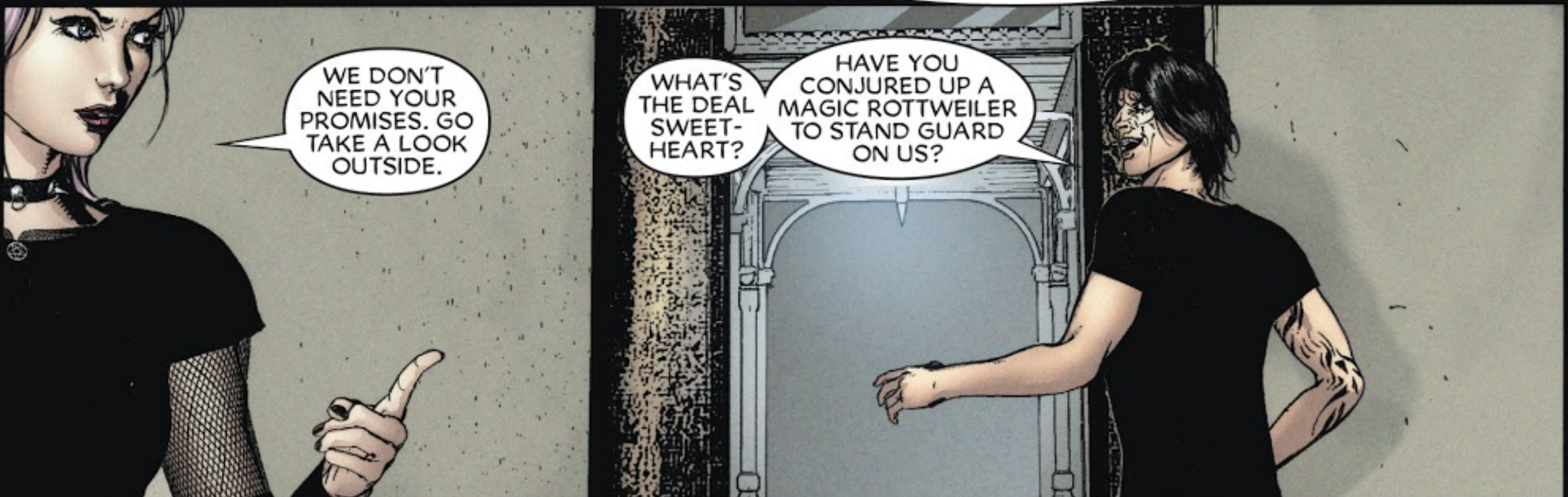


YOU WON'T GET INTO ANY MORE TROUBLE. IN FACT YOU WON'T SET FOOT OUTSIDE THIS BUILDING.

AS LONG AS IT TAKES.

O-KAY. THAT'S FOR HOW LONG EXACTLY?

SURE. WE CAN DO THAT. WE PROMISE, RIGHT, ZAB? CROSS OUR HEARTS.



WE DON'T NEED YOUR PROMISES. GO TAKE A LOOK OUTSIDE.

WHAT'S THE DEAL SWEET-HEART?

HAVE YOU CONJURED UP A MAGIC ROTTWEILER TO STAND GUARD ON US?



I'VE CAST
A BINDING
SPELL
AROUND THIS
ENTIRE
BUILDING.

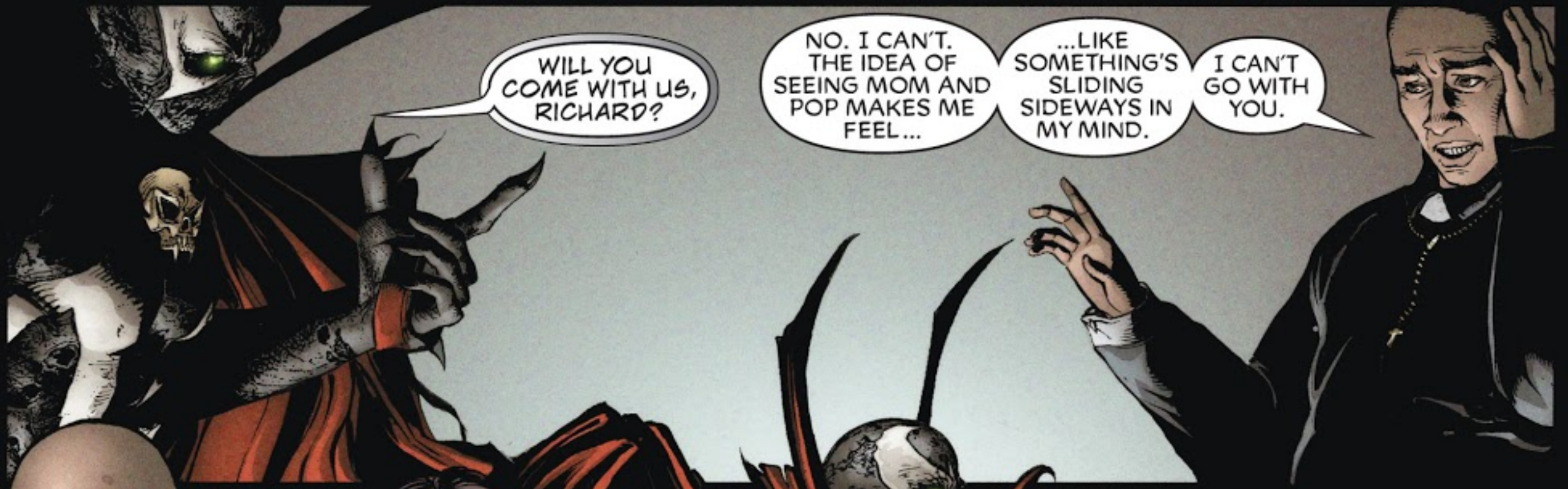
YOU
DIDN'T HAVE TO
FRY MY FREAKING
ASS!

I'D
HAVE TAKEN
YOUR
WORD FOR
IT.



SOONER OR
LATER YOU WOULD HAVE
TRIED TO WALK OUT AND I
REALLY WANTED TO BE HERE
TO SEE YOUR FACE WHEN
THAT HAPPENED...

...SWEETHEART.



WILL YOU
COME WITH US,
RICHARD?

NO. I CAN'T.
THE IDEA OF
SEEING MOM AND
POP MAKES ME
FEEL...

...LIKE
SOMETHING'S
SLIDING
SIDWAYS IN
MY MIND.

I CAN'T
GO WITH
YOU.



IS THIS
SPELL OF
YOURS
GOING TO
STOP ME
LEAVING
HERE?

NO, IT ONLY
AFFECTS AB AND
ZAB. YOU CAN
COME AND GO AS
YOU LIKE.

JUST TAKE
CARE, RICHIE.
KEEP AN EYE ON
THOSE TWO.
THEY AREN'T TO
BE TRUSTED.

I'LL GET
BACK HERE
AS SOON AS
I CAN.



YOU REALLY
ARE AL, AREN'T
YOU? THIS ISN'T
SOME KIND OF
TEST.

YEAH, IT'S
ME, RICHIE,
THIS ISN'T A
TEST.



IS HE GOING TO
BE ALL RIGHT?

NO, I
DON'T
THINK
HE IS.





THEN I
GUESS WE
GO IN.



THERE
IT IS. THE SPELL
DISAPPEARED AS SOON
AS YOU CAME INTO
CONTACT WITH IT, AS
IF IT WAS WAITING
FOR YOU.



IT WAS
NO ACCIDENT
THAT WE ALL
CAME
TOGETHER LIKE
THIS. ME, YOU,
RICHARD.

THEN AB
AND ZAB BRING
THE SIN-EATERS
UP FROM HELL.
CREATURES THAT
DIG UP
SUPPRESSED
MEMORIES.

MAMMON
MADE YOU
FORGET YOUR
PARENTS, BUT
HE'S ALSO THE
ONE WHO PUT
ALL THIS
TOGETHER. HE
WANTS YOU
TO GO IN
THERE.

YOU'RE
RIGHT.
WE SHOULD
WALK
AWAY.



JUST BE
CAREFUL IS
ALL I'M-

-HEY,
LOOK. IS THAT
HER?



HELLO,
AL.

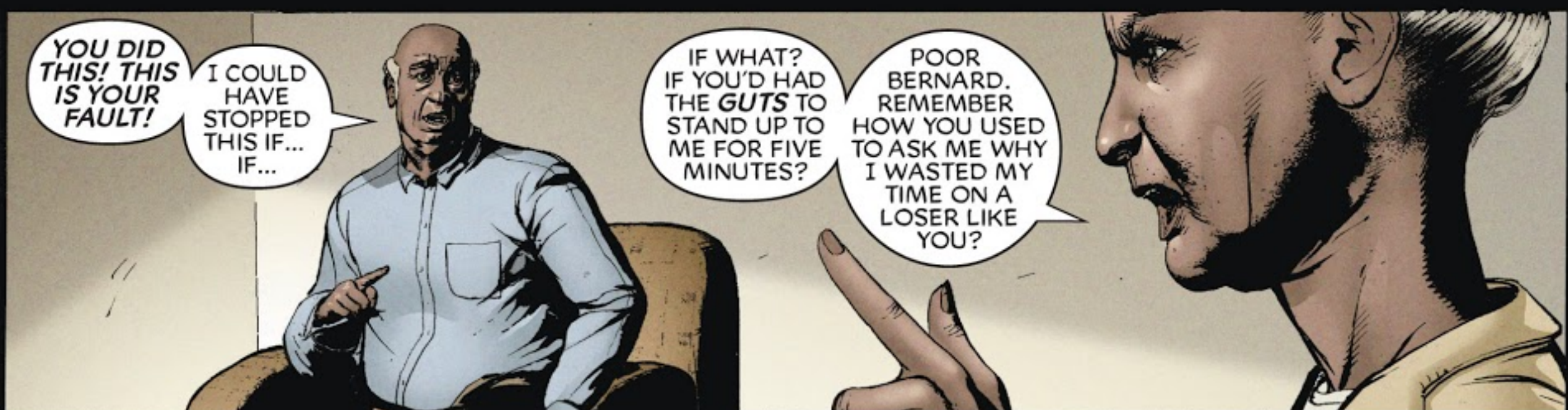


YOU
RECOGNIZE
ME.



OF
COURSE.

COME ON
IN. YOUR FATHER
WILL BE SO PLEASED.
HE ASKS ABOUT YOU
EVERY DAY.





MALEFICK.
TELL
ME ABOUT
HIM.

WHY DID
YOU BRING
HIM TO THIS
HOUSE?

WHY
DID YOU LET
HIM POISON
US?



POISON
YOU?

HE'S THE
ONE WHO
RAISED YOU UP
ABOVE THE
MEDIOCRITY
OF THE HUMAN
RACE.

"I MET MALEFICK WHEN I WAS TWENTY-ONE. I WAS STUDYING COMPARATIVE RELIGION AT WESTERN MICHIGAN. I HAD A BOYFRIEND WHO INVITED ME TO JOIN A SATANIST GROUP, THE CHURCH OF LUCIFER."



"ONE NIGHT, MALEFICK ATTENDED A BLACK MASS. HE WATCHED US WITH CONTEMPT, AS IF HE WERE WATCHING CHILDREN AT PLAY."



"WHEN HE LOOKED AT ME THERE WAS A CONNECTION BETWEEN US. IT FELT LIKE FIRE IN MY BLOOD."



"WHEN HE LEFT,
I FOLLOWED HIM
WITHOUT A WORD
BEING SPOKEN
BETWEEN US.



"IN THE DAYS
AND MONTHS
THAT FOLLOWED,
HE SHOWED ME
TRUE POWER.
HE SUMMONED
DEMONS FROM
HELL.

"AND HE TOLD
ME OF THE HELLSPAWN,
CHOSEN FROM AMONG
HUMANKIND TO LEAD THE
HOSTS OF THE UNDER-
WORLD TO WAR.

"THERE HAVE BEEN
MANY GENERATIONS
OF HELLSPAWN, BUT
MALEFICK KNEW THAT
THERE WAS ONE
COMING, WHO WOULD
BE FAR GREATER THAN
THOSE WHO HAD
COME BEFORE.



HE IS THE
DESTROYER AND
THE SAVIOR. HE WILL
MAKE THE WORLD IN
HIS IMAGE. AND THEN
THIS WORLD WILL
BE MINE.

"HE SAID I WOULD BE THE
MOTHER OF THE PROMISED ONE.
I WAS READY TO HAVE HIS
CHILD. BUT MALEFICK... HE ISN'T
MADE LIKE OTHER MEN. HE IS A
FALLEN ANGEL AND ANGELS
DON'T DEFILE THEMSELVES WITH
THE HUMAN PASSIONS.

"BERNARD
WAS TO BE
THE FATHER."







HAVE YOU SEEN HIM?
HAVE YOU SEEN MALEFICK?

YES.

I'VE SEEN HIM.

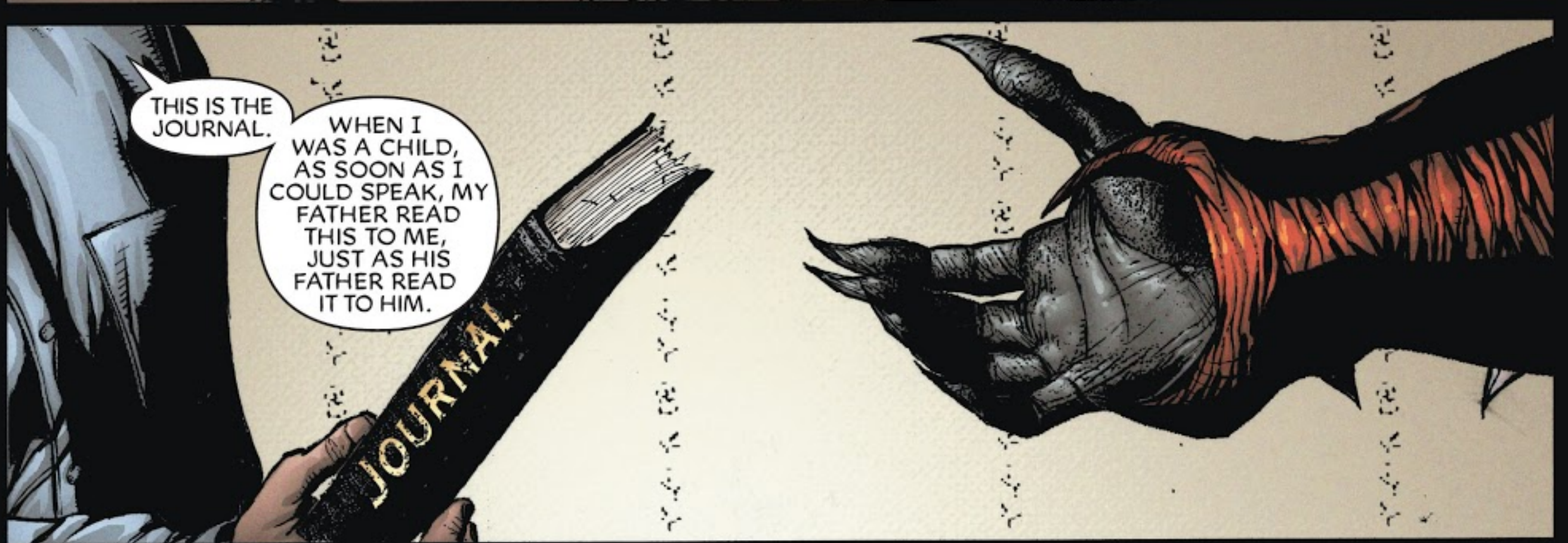
HE SAID HE'D COME BACK FOR ME.
HE SAID HE'D TAKE ME AWAY WITH HIM.

I GUESS HE LIED.



HE DOESN'T LIE.

HE'LL COME FOR ME.



THIS IS THE JOURNAL.

WHEN I WAS A CHILD,
AS SOON AS I COULD SPEAK, MY FATHER READ THIS TO ME,
JUST AS HIS FATHER READ IT TO HIM.



*I write this for you, my children, for my grandchildren,
for all my generations to come...*





THE HELL HOUSE.
NORMAL,
ILLINOIS.





HELLO, RICHARD.

MISTER MALEFICK. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.



THAT DEPENDS ON YOUR PERSPECTIVE.

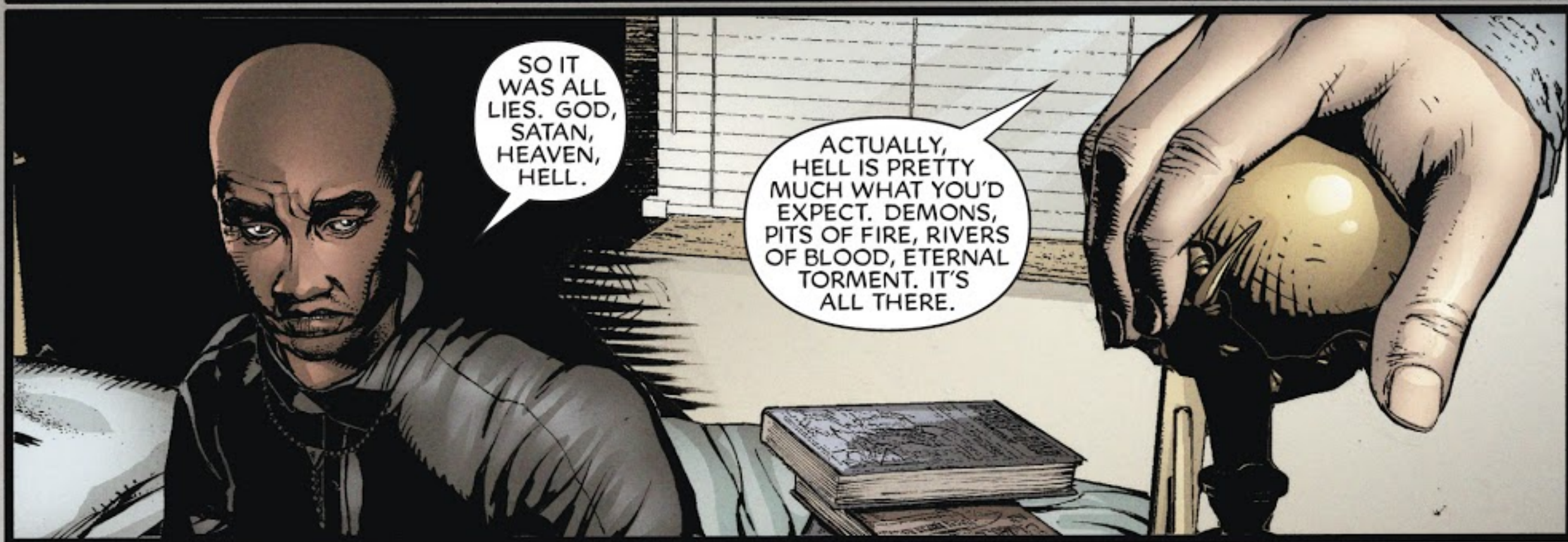


I'VE BEEN FOOLING MYSELF WITH ALL THIS, HAVEN'T I?

THERE'S NO GOD TO FORGIVE MY SINS, NO HEAVEN WAITING FOR ME.

NO HEAVEN YOU'D WANT TO GO TO. I USED TO LIVE THERE.

BELIEVE ME, IT DOESN'T LIVE UP TO THE HYPE.



SO IT WAS ALL LIES. GOD, SATAN, HEAVEN, HELL.

ACTUALLY, HELL IS PRETTY MUCH WHAT YOU'D EXPECT. DEMONS, PITS OF FIRE, RIVERS OF BLOOD, ETERNAL TORMENT. IT'S ALL THERE.



I BELONG THERE.

YES, YOU DO.



THERE WAS NEVER ANY REDEMPTION FOR ME.

I TRIED. ALL THESE YEARS, WARNING PEOPLE. I THOUGHT IF I SAVED ENOUGH OF THEM...



YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY. THERE'S NO JUSTICE, RICHIE...

...THERE'S JUST US.



COME ON. I'LL TAKE YOU DOWN.




I THOUGHT THEY GOT RID OF THESE DOORS.


NOT THIS ONE. THIS DOOR WAS INTENDED ONLY FOR YOU.




I'LL BE SEEING YOU, RICHIE.




HE'S GONE. MALEFICK, MAMMON, WHATEVER HE CALLS HIMSELF. HE'S GONE AND RICHARD IS ALL ALONE. HE KNOWS HE HAS TO DO THIS. HE HAS TO STEP THROUGH THE DOOR AND TAKE HIS MEDICINE LIKE A MAN.



BUT HE FEELS LIKE A LITTLE BOY. LOST, ALONE, COLD.

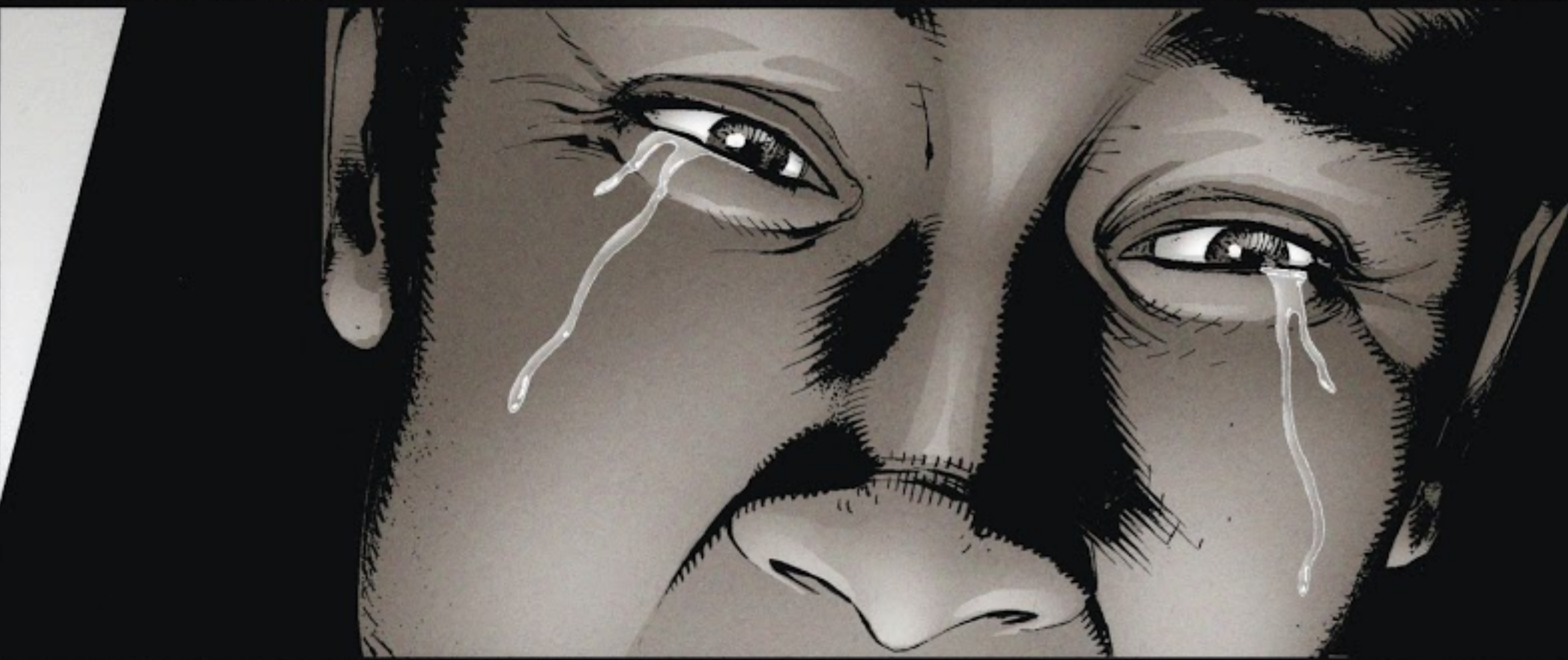


LITTLE RICHIE CURLED UP IN HIS BED, AFRAID TO GO TO SLEEP. FEARFUL OF THE DREAMS THAT SLEEP WILL BRING.




THEN, HIS FATHER IS THERE.

RICHIE PRETENDS TO SLEEP, SO HE CAN WATCH HIM THROUGH HALF-CLOSED EYELIDS.



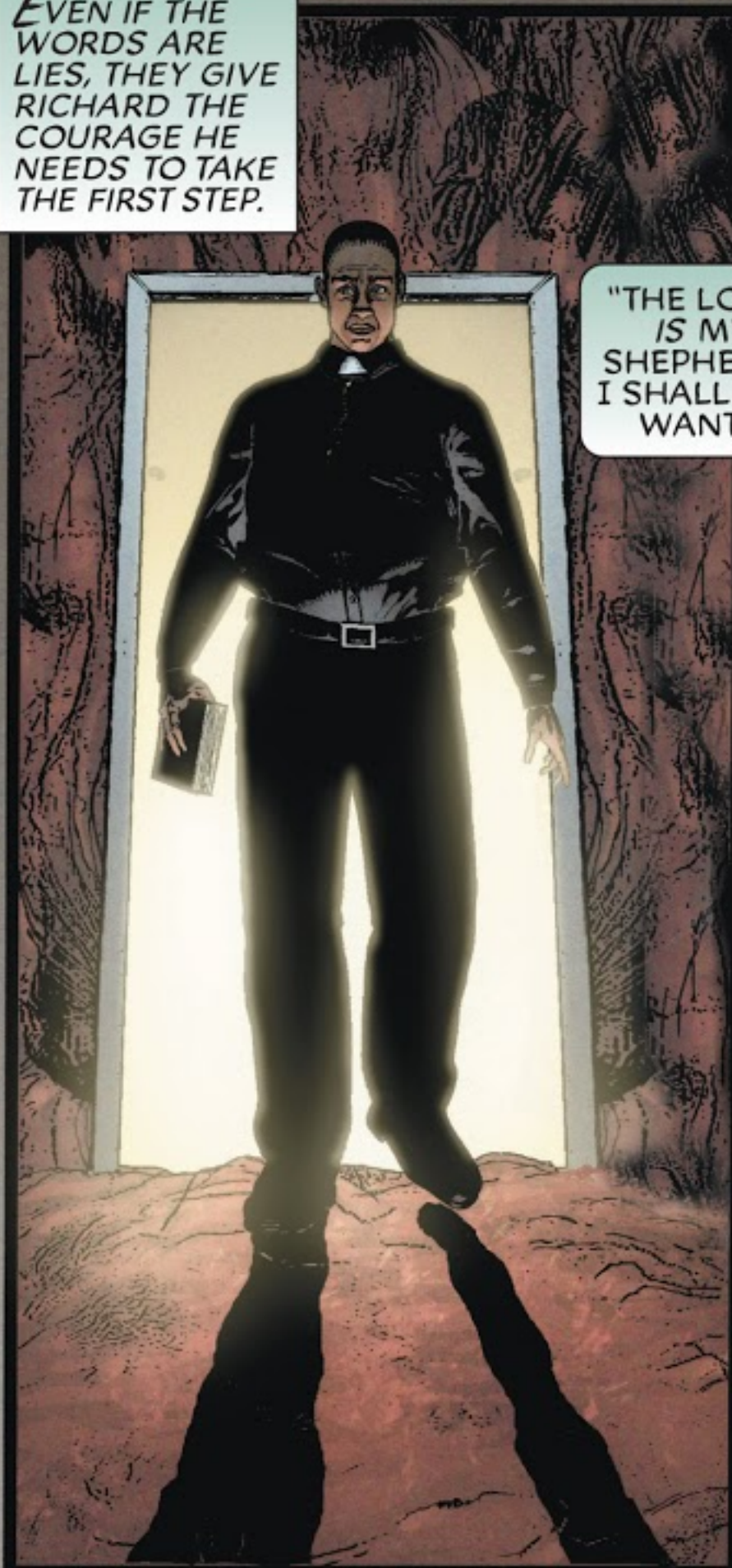
HE SEES THE TEARS RUNNING DOWN HIS FATHER'S CHEEKS.

HE DIDN'T KNOW UNTIL THEN THAT GROWN-UPS CRY.



HE REMEMBERS HIS FATHER KNEELING BESIDE THE BED, WHISPERING A PRAYER AS HE ALWAYS DID, EVERY TIME HE WENT AWAY. A PRAYER TO KEEP HIS CHILDREN SAFE.

EVEN IF THE WORDS ARE LIES, THEY GIVE RICHARD THE COURAGE HE NEEDS TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP.



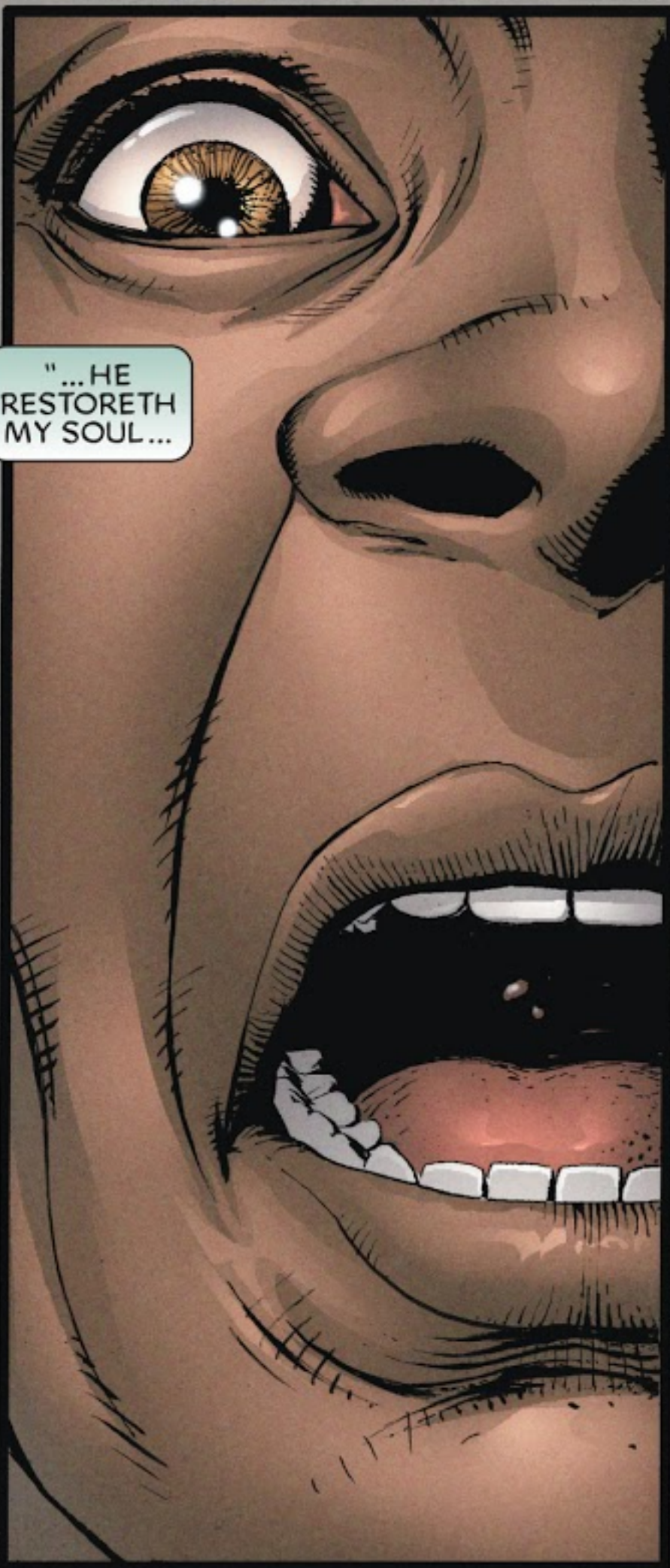
"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD; I SHALL NOT WANT..."



"...HE MAKETH ME TO LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES..."



"...HE LEADETH ME BESIDE THE STILL WATERS..."



"...HE RESTORETH MY SOUL..."



"...HE LEADETH ME IN THE PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE..."



"...YEA, THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL..."



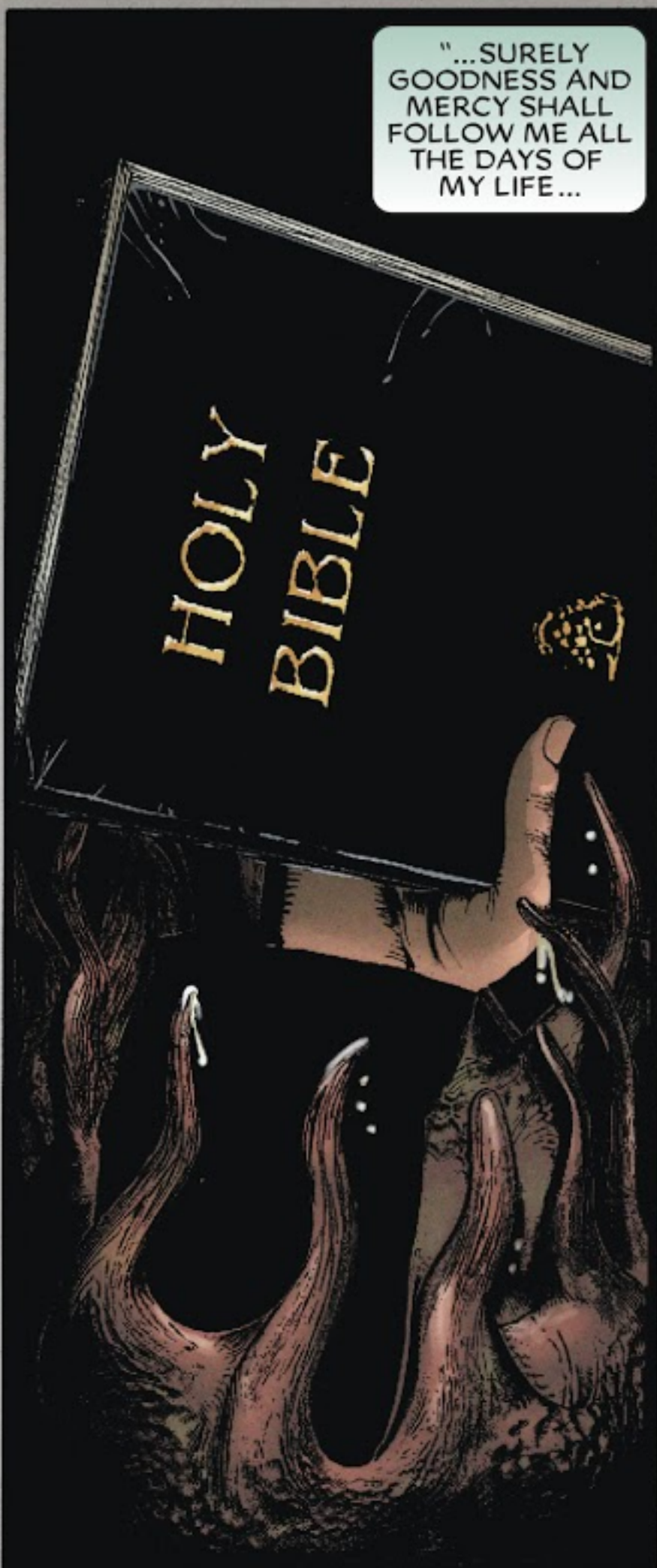
"...FOR THOU
ART WITH ME;
THY ROD AND
THY STAFF
THEY COMFORT
ME..."



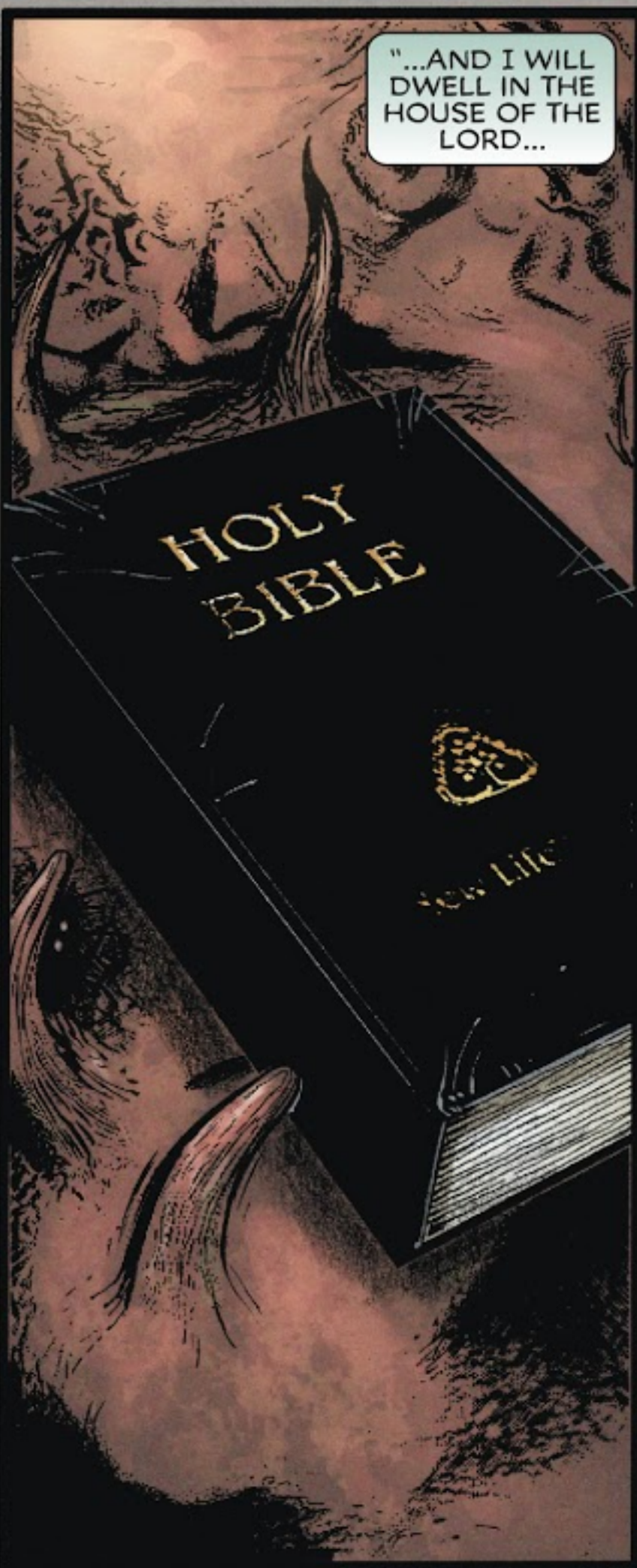
"...THOU PREPAREST
A TABLE BEFORE ME
IN THE PRESENCE OF
MINE ENEMIES..."



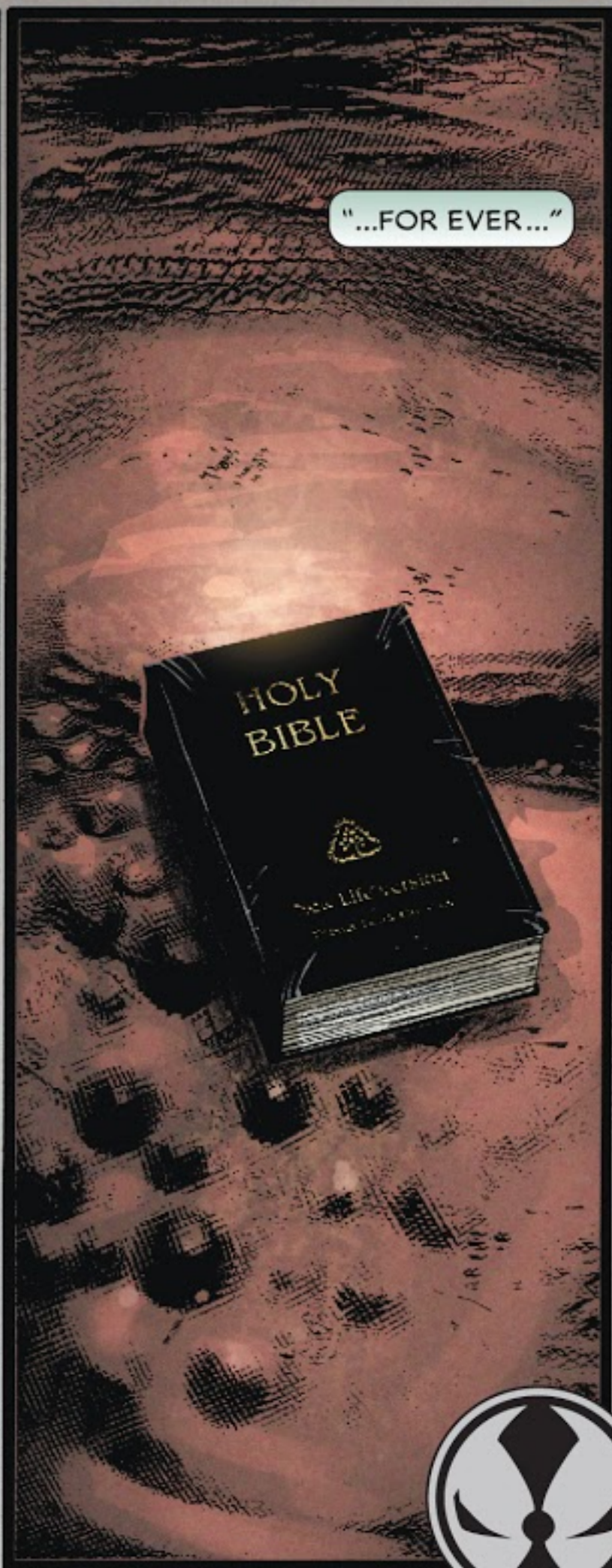
"...THOU ANOINTEST
MY HEAD WITH OIL;
MY CUP RUNNETH
OVER..."



"...SURELY
GOODNESS AND
MERCY SHALL
FOLLOW ME ALL
THE DAYS OF
MY LIFE..."



"...AND I WILL
DWELL IN THE
HOUSE OF THE
LORD..."



"...FOR EVER..."





HINE
MAYHEW
TROY

SPAWN

GUNSLINGER SPAWN: PART 1



ISSUE 174 DIGITAL EDITION

SPAWN.COM

Capullo

FEBRUARY 1881. THE HILLS WEST OF COLORADO SPRINGS.

THAT WAS ONE HELL OF A WINTER. ONLY A DAMNED FOOL OR A DESPERATE MAN WOULD BE RIDING OUT ALONE IN A BLIZZARD LIKE THAT.

I GUESS I WAS BOTH.

I THANKED GOD FOR MY BUFFALO HIDE COAT. I GOT IT FROM A PRIVATE IN THE 9th WHO TOOK IT AS SPOILS OF WAR FROM THE COMANCHES DURING THE STAKED PLAINS UPRISING IN '74.

A BUFFALO COAT FOR A BUFFALO SOLDIER.

THE NUMBING COLD AND THE FATIGUE WORKED THEIR EFFECT ON ME AND I FELL INTO A KIND OF STUPOR. IN THAT WHIRLING KALEIDOSCOPE OF WHITE, I BEGAN TO SEE IMAGES FORMING.

LIKE A DROWNING MAN, MY LIFE PASSED BEFORE MY EYES.

THERE I WAS, PROUD AS A PEACOCK, PARADING WITH MY COMRADES AT FORT LEAVENWORTH, WHERE I FIRST ENLISTED IN THE 10th CAVALRY.

I CONDUCTED MYSELF WELL AGAINST THE RENEGADE INDIANS OF KANSAS AND COLORADO, WAS MENTIONED IN LETTERS FOUR TIMES AND ROSE TO THE RANK OF SERGEANT.

LATER, AS I WILL TELL, I WAS OBLIGED TO CHANGE MY NAME TO HENRY RICHARD SIMMONS, BUT BACK THEN I WAS FRANCIS CHARLES PARKER, THE SON OF COTTON SLAVES, AN OFFICER OF THE UNITED STATES CAVALRY AND THE EQUAL OF ANY MAN...

...OR SO I THOUGHT, UNTIL WE WERE POSTED TO FORT CONCHO, NEAR THE TOWN OF SAN ANGELO IN TEXAS.

I'VE HEARD THAT GENERAL SHERIDAN ONCE SAID "IF I OWNED HELL AND TEXAS, I WOULD RENT OUT TEXAS, AND LIVE IN HELL." I WOULD NOT ARGUE AGAINST HIM...

DON'T THEY LOOK QUITE CHARMING IN THEIR UNIFORMS, CLINGING TO THEIR HORSES LIKE MONKEYS?

A JIGABOO ON A HORSE IS NOT CHARMING. I CALL IT A GODDAMNED OFFENSE AGAINST NATURE.

HEY, SOLDIER BOY!

RELATIONS WITH THE CITIZENS OF SAN ANGELO WERE NEVER EASY, BUT THEY CAME TO A HEAD A FEW MONTHS LATER, WHEN ONE OF OURS WAS SHOT DOWN IN COLD BLOOD AS HE RODE BY BILL POWELL'S SALOON.

BLAM!

THERE NOW. I BELIEVE HE HAS LEARNED HIS PLACE.

WHEN THE MEN HEARD OF THE MURDER AND THAT THE CRIMINAL WAS WALKING FREE AND BOASTING OF IT, THERE WAS NO HOLDING THEM.

I RODE ALONG WITH THEM IN THE VAIN HOPE THAT A COOL HEAD MIGHT AVERT A DISASTER.

SOME OF THE MEN HAD PUT TOGETHER A DECLARATION WHICH WAS DULY DELIVERED TO AN ATTENTIVE AUDIENCE AT THE SALOON.

WE, THE SOLDIERS OF THE U.S. ARMY, DO HEREBY WARN COW-BOYS AND OTHERS OF SAN ANGELO AND VICINITY, TO RECOGNIZE OUR RIGHT OF WAY, AS JUST AND PEACEABLE MEN. IF WE DO NOT RECEIVE JUSTICE AND FAIR PLAY, WHICH WE MUST HAVE, SOME ONE MUST SUFFER. IF NOT THE GUILTY, THE INNOCENT.

IT HAS GONE TOO FAR. WE DEMAND JUSTICE OR DEATH!

HAPPY TO OBLIGE!

BLAM!

SO, IT TRANSPIRED THAT IT WAS MY COOL HEAD AND STEADY HAND THAT DREW FIRST BLOOD.



Blam!

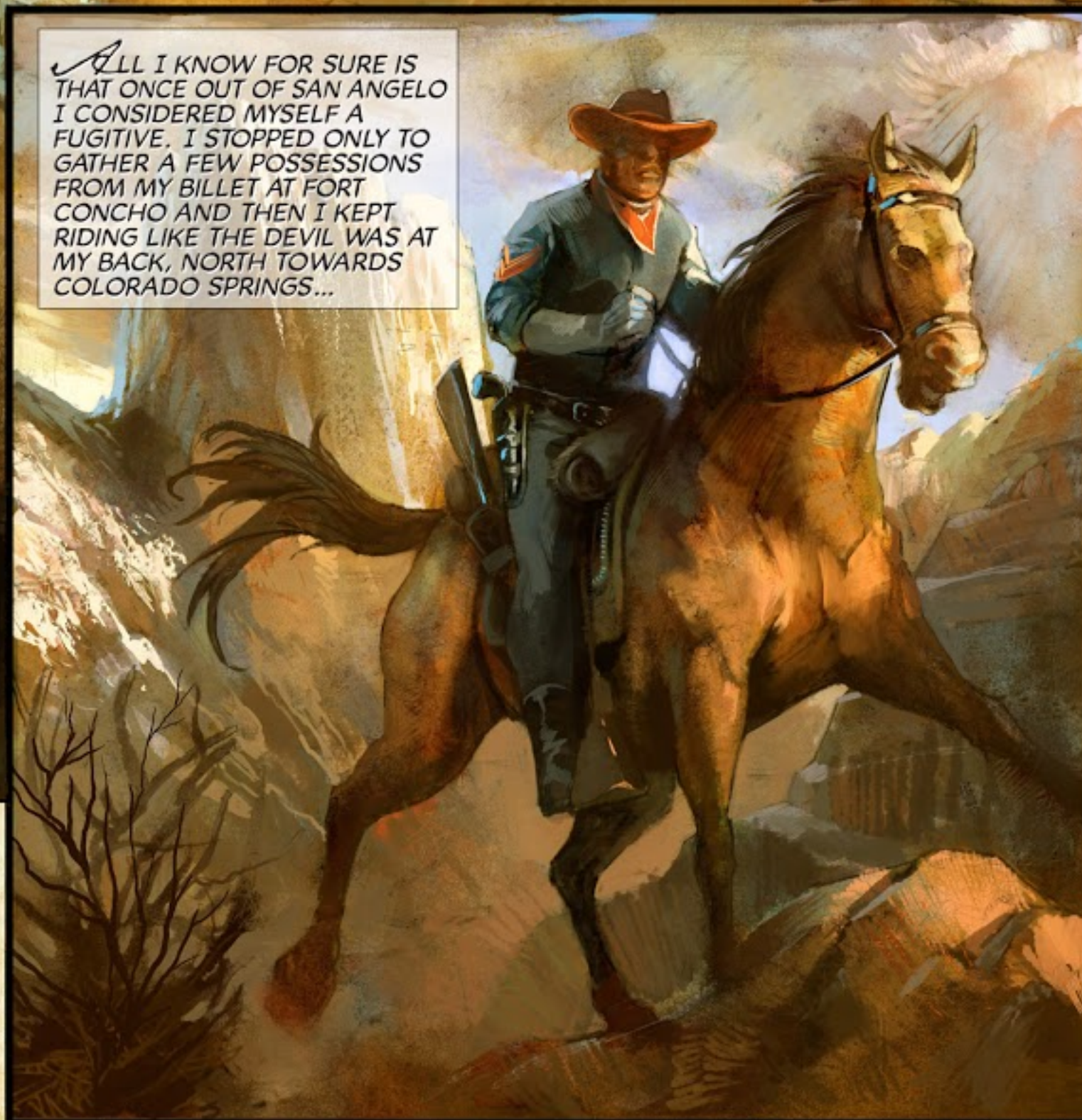
BLAM!

Pow!

Ka-POW!

THEN ALL HELL LET LOOSE. I'VE HEARD MANY VERSIONS OF WHAT HAPPENED THERE. SOME SAY A DOZEN OR MORE LAY DEAD AT THE END OF IT, SOME THAT THERE WERE NONE SLAIN AT ALL. I CAN'T VOUCH FOR THE ACCURACY OF ANY ACCOUNT.

ALL I KNOW FOR SURE IS THAT ONCE OUT OF SAN ANGELO I CONSIDERED MYSELF A FUGITIVE. I STOPPED ONLY TO GATHER A FEW POSSESSIONS FROM MY BILLET AT FORT CONCHO AND THEN I KEPT RIDING LIKE THE DEVIL WAS AT MY BACK, NORTH TOWARDS COLORADO SPRINGS...



...TO ALMA,
MY ALMA...



I LOST COUNT OF THE DAYS I JOURNEYED, DEPENDING ON THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS TO FEED ME.

I KNEW I COULD NOT RIDE INTO COLORADO SPRINGS, WHERE THE LAW WOULD BE WAITING FOR ME. SO I HEADED INTO THE HILLS ABOVE THE CITY WITH THE IDEA THAT I WOULD SOMEHOW SEND WORD TO ALMA.


A BLIZZARD DESCENDED ON ME AND I THINK I WOULD HAVE GIVEN MYSELF TO THE STORM'S ICY EMBRACE, IF IT WERE NOT FOR MY FIANCEE'S SMILING FACE, EVER BEFORE ME.

THEN I SAW HIM. HE APPEARED FROM NOWHERE, AS IF HE WAS CONJURED RIGHT OUT OF THE SNOW...

...DRESSED ALL IN WHITE ON A HORSE AS BLACK AS DEATH.

EVEN AT THAT DISTANCE, I COULD FEEL HIS EYES UPON ME.

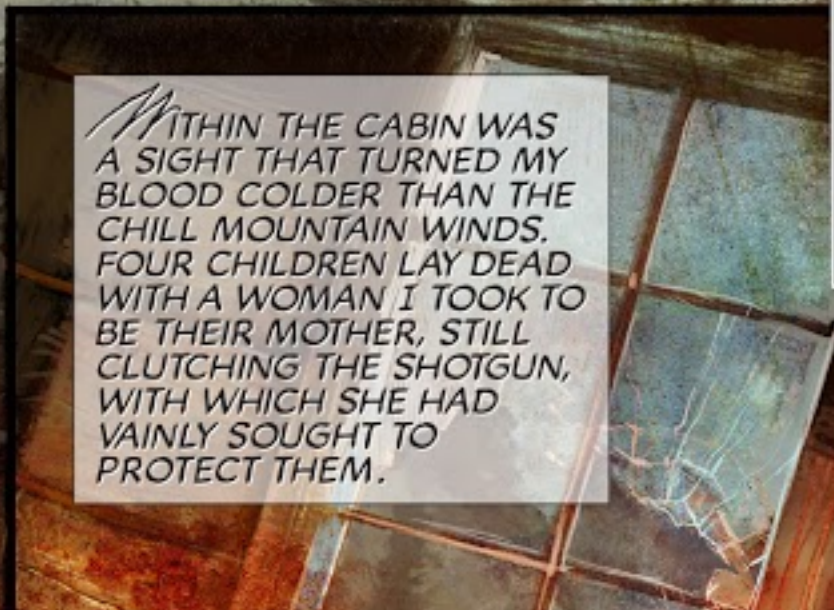
AND THEN, WITHOUT A SIGN, HE TURNED AND RODE AWAY. I FIGURED THAT, COATLESS AS HE WAS, THERE MUST BE SHELTER NEARBY. SO I FOLLOWED HIM.




I LOST SIGHT OF THE RIDER BUT AFTER A SHORT WHILE I CAME UPON THE HEART-WARMING SIGHT OF A CABIN.



*T*HE LIGHT SPILLING FROM THE OPEN DOOR WAS WELCOME ENOUGH.



*W*ITHIN THE CABIN WAS A SIGHT THAT TURNED MY BLOOD COLDER THAN THE CHILL MOUNTAIN WINDS. FOUR CHILDREN LAY DEAD WITH A WOMAN I TOOK TO BE THEIR MOTHER, STILL CLUTCHING THE SHOTGUN, WITH WHICH SHE HAD VAINLY SOUGHT TO PROTECT THEM.



*T*HE BLOOD ON THE SNOW, LESS SO...

I NEVER HEARD THE MARSHAL AND HIS DEPUTIES COMING UP ON ME. THAT MOST LIKELY SAVED ME. IF I HAD DRAWN MY WEAPON THEY WOULD HAVE HAD THEIR EXCUSE TO SHOOT ME ON THE SPOT.

JESUS HOLY CHRIST! LOOKIT THIS MESS!

STEP AWAY FROM HER, AND KEEP YOUR HANDS HIGH.

LOOKS LIKE WE GOT US ONE OF THEM NEGRO SOLDIERS.

YOU ROBBIN' THE DEAD THERE, BOY?

I DIDN'T DO THIS.

I KNOW WHO DID THIS.

GUESS I KNOW WHO YOU ARE TOO, MR. PARKER. WE HAVE THE TELEGRAPH HERE. HEARD NEWS OF THAT TROUBLE DOWN IN SAN ANGELO.

I'LL HOLD YOU IN THE TOWN JAIL UNTIL THIS DAMNED SNOW ABATES.

YOU BEHAVE AND I'LL SEE YOU SAFE DOWN TO COLORADO SPRINGS SOON AS THE ROADS ARE OPEN. RECKON THE ARMY WILL SEE TO YOU THEN.

WELCOME TO BANE
POPULATION 259

I HEAR THE MILITARY PREFERS A FIRING SQUAD TO A ROPE NECKTIE. GUESS THAT'S AS CIVILIZED AN END AS ANY MAN COULD HOPE FOR.

WELL, I WAS HOPING TO DIE IN MY BED WITH MY WIFE HOLDING MY HAND AND A DOZEN GRANDCHILDREN SITTING BY, SAYING PRAYERS FOR ME.

Heh.



AS WE ARRIVED
IN TOWN, I SAW HIM
ONCE MORE...



...THE MAN IN WHITE.



WHO IS
THAT MAN,
MARSHAL?

YOU'RE
SNOW-BLIND
OR
DREAMING,
SON.



THERE'S
NO ONE UP
THERE.



DID YOU
SEE
THEM?

DID YOU
SEE THE SORRY
BLOODY
MORTALITY
OF IT?

MR. PARKER,
MAKE THE
ACQUAINTANCE OF
JEREMY WINSTON,
MORE COMMONLY
REFERRED TO
HEREABOUTS AS
OL' JOB.

IT'S HIS FAMILY
THAT WAS
MASSACRED.



HE KILLED
HIS OWN
FAMILY?

MY
MONEY'S
ON IT.

I'LL RIP
THE LIPS OFF
YOUR LYING
MOUTH YOU SON
OF A SYPHILITIC
WHORE!



IT WAS
KEMPER'S
MEN AND
YOU **KNOW**
IT!

SET THAT
MURDERING
JACKAL IN FRONT
OF ME WITHOUT
THESE BARS TO
HOLD ME, AND
I'LL **PERSUADE**
THE TRUTH
FROM HIM.



YOU'LL
HAVE YOUR
DAY IN
COURT.

I CREDIT
YOU WITH MORE
BRAINS THAN THAT,
MARSHAL. KEMPER
WILL NEVER ALLOW
ME TO SPEAK
AGAINST HIM IN
A COURT OF
LAW.



SILAS, YOU
WATCH THESE
TWO. NO VISITORS
SET FOOT IN THIS
OFFICE UNTIL I
RETURN.

I'LL BE
SEEING TO
THE
RETRIEVAL
OF THE
BODIES.

YOU TREAT
THEM RIGHT
MARSHAL, OR
I'LL SWING
FOR YOU.



I'LL
GIVE THEM
ALL DUE
RESPECT.
YOU KNOW
THAT.



DON'T THINK
I'LL SPARE YOU,
MARSHAL. I'LL VISIT
MY VENGEANCE ON
EVERY LAST SOUL
WHO DRAWS
BREATH IN THIS
GODFORSAKEN
HELLHOLE.



BEST GET USED TO OL' JOB'S SERMONIZING. HE USED TO BE A PREACHER BEFORE HE WENT NATIVE AND SET UP HOUSE WITH THAT INDIAN SQUAW.

LORD KNOWS WHAT GOD HE WORSHIPS NOW.



MY WIFE HAS A NAME.

AND I'LL GIVE MY ALLEGIANCE TO ANY GOD OR DEVIL WHO WILL GRANT ME A SINGLE DAY OF FREEDOM TO PAY BACK THE BLOOD OF MY WIFE AND CHILDREN.

WILL YOU HOBBLE YOUR LIP NOW AND GIVE ME SOME PEACE?



WHAT'S SHE CALLED?

WHUT?

YOUR WIFE. WHAT'S HER NAME?



KIMI.



KIMI. THAT'S A GOOD NAME.

IT MEANS SECRET.

SHE KEPT HER OWN COUNSEL MOSTLY.

SHE WAS A GOOD WOMAN.



WHAT HAPPENED UP THERE? WHO IS THIS KEMPER FELLOW?



THE WIND KEENED AND WAILED OUTSIDE THE DOOR, PROVIDING MOURNFUL ACCOMPANIMENT AS OL' JOB RECOUNTED HIS WOEFUL TALE.



I LIVED PEACEABLY ENOUGH ON MY OWN LAND. THESE TWO DECADES PAST I'VE TRAPPED FUR AND TRADED HONESTLY WITH THE PEOPLE OF BANE.



"THEN SILVER WAS STRUCK AND THE VERMIN SWARMED IN. SELF-PROCLAIMED 'BUSINESSMEN' LIKE ED KEMPER AND HIS GANG OF THIEVES. HE'S BOUGHT UP MOST OF THE LAND HEREABOUTS. I STOOD AGAINST HIM. I KNOW THERE'S SILVER ON MY LAND BUT I WANT NONE OF IT."



THERE'S NO PRICE WILL BUY MY LAND OR MY HOME.

HERE I STAND, KEMPER.



"I WASN'T THERE WHEN HIS MEN RETURNED. MY CONJECTURE IS THAT THEY THOUGHT TO INTIMIDATE MY DEAR WIFE."

"THEY DIDN'T KNOW KIMI. SHE DON'T COTTON MUCH TO INTIMIDATION."



THEY MURDERED THEM ALL. AND NOT ONE MAN IN THIS TOWN WOULD LIFT A FINGER AGAINST THE GUILTY PARTY.

SO I WENT AFTER HIM MYSELF. I PUT DOWN TWO OF HIS LACKEYS BEFORE I WAS SUBDUED.



IT'S THEIR BLOOD YOU SEE ON ME. I HAVE NO SHAME FOR IT.

I'D SPILL THE BLOOD OF EVERY BASTARD IN THIS TOWN AND BATHE IN IT GLADLY.



THAT COULD BE ARRANGED.

ONCE AGAIN THE MAN
IN WHITE HAD APPEARED
WITH NO FOREWARNING.

THE DEPUTY WAS
DEAD TO THE WORLD,
ALTHOUGH HE HAD NOT
TAKEN MORE THAN A
GLASS OF WHISKEY.

GENTLEMEN,
WHAT WOULD
YOU DO TO LEAVE
THIS PLACE?
WHAT WOULD
YOU GIVE?

WHAT
PRICE ARE
YOU
ASKING?

THE ONLY THING
EITHER OF YOU HAS
LEFT TO BARTER.

YOUR
SOUL.

HA!
I IMAGINED
THE DEVIL WITH
A RUDDIER
COMPLEXION.

DO
YOU THINK
THE DEVIL
HAS THE
INCLINATION
OR THE TIME
TO BARTER
FOR A SINGLE
HUMAN
SOUL?

HE'LL
HAVE
IT WHEN
THE TIME
COMES
WHETHER
YOU WILL
IT OR NOT.

THE ONE I
REPRESENT IS
THE DEMON
MALEBOLGIA.





YOU INTRIGUE ME. I'VE MADE THIS OFFER MANY TIMES. I HAVE NEVER BEEN REFUSED BECAUSE I KNOW IN ADVANCE THE MAN I SEEK.

THIS TIME...



...THIS TIME, I'M NOT CERTAIN. I'M DRAWN TO BOTH OF YOU.

I MUST BE SURE THAT I MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE.

THE HELL WITH YOUR PHILOSOPHIES!

HE HAS REFUSED YOUR OFFER. NOW WILL YOU LET ME FREE?



NO. I THINK NOT. YOU DOUBT ME.

IN ORDER TO MAKE THIS PACT, YOU MUST BELIEVE...



YOU WERE RIGHT, JOB. KEMPER WILL NOT LET YOU LIVE TO STAND TRIAL.

WHEN YOU ARE LOOKING DEATH IN THE FACE YOU WILL BELIEVE.

THEN I'LL ASK AGAIN FOR THE FINAL TIME. ONE OF YOU WILL ACCEPT.

AND WHEN WILL THAT BE?



Bam!
BAM!
BAM!

I DO BELIEVE THAT'S DEATH KNOCKING AT THE DOOR, RIGHT NOW.



UNLOCK
THOSE CELLS
NOW SILAS. THOSE
SKUNKS AIN'T
WORTH TAKING A
BULLET FOR.



THEY DON'T
SEE HIM. HE'S
STANDING THERE AS
PLAIN AS A BOIL ON A
WHORE'S BACKSIDE
AND THEY DON'T
SEE HIM.



IN DUE
REGARD FOR
NATURAL JUSTICE,
THE VIGILANCE
COMMITTEE OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF BANE,
COLORADO HAS DULY
CONCLUDED THAT IN
THE CASE OF THE
NOTORIOUS MURDERS
OF ARTHUR SHAW
AND MICHAEL REILLY
BY THIS HERE
MISCREANT...



...AND THE
UNHOLY
MASSACRE OF
HIS OWN KITH
AN' KIN, NAMELY
HIS SQUAW
WHORE AND
FIVE BASTARD
CHILDREN...

...THE
PRISONER
KNOWN AS
OL' JOB IS
HEREBY
CONDEMNED
TO HANG BY
HIS FILTHY
NECK UNTIL
DEAD...



...AND
THE
NIGGER
WITH
HIM.







ALMA.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER, I REMEMBER AS ONE LONG NIGHTMARE. IT BEGAN AS THE ROPE BIT INTO MY NECK AND MY VISION TURNED RED.

ABOVE THE RINGING IN MY EARS, I HEARD THE VOICE OF THE MARSHAL.



CUT THOSE MEN DOWN!

I'LL HAVE NO LYNCHING IN MY TOWN.

GODDAMMIT! I SHOULD'A GONE FOR THE LONG DROP.

SHALL I SHOOT HIM?

BETWEEN THE EYES IF YOU PLEASE, MISTER SHAW.

THE OTHER ONE TOO?

I DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT THE OTHER.

JUST KILL ME THAT CURSED BIBLE THUMPER!



THE MAN IN WHITE TOUCHED
THE SHOOTER'S ARM. NO
MORE THAN THAT. A TOUCH...



...AND MY LIFE WAS SPARED.



THE LAST I
SAW, BEFORE
I PASSED
OUT, WAS HIS
FACE...



...HIS
DAMNED
FACE.



HOW
IS HE?

HE'LL
LIVE.

NO!
THIS ISN'T
RIGHT.

DON'T
TRY TO
SPEAK. YOU'VE
BEEN DAMN' NEAR
CHOKED TO
DEATH.

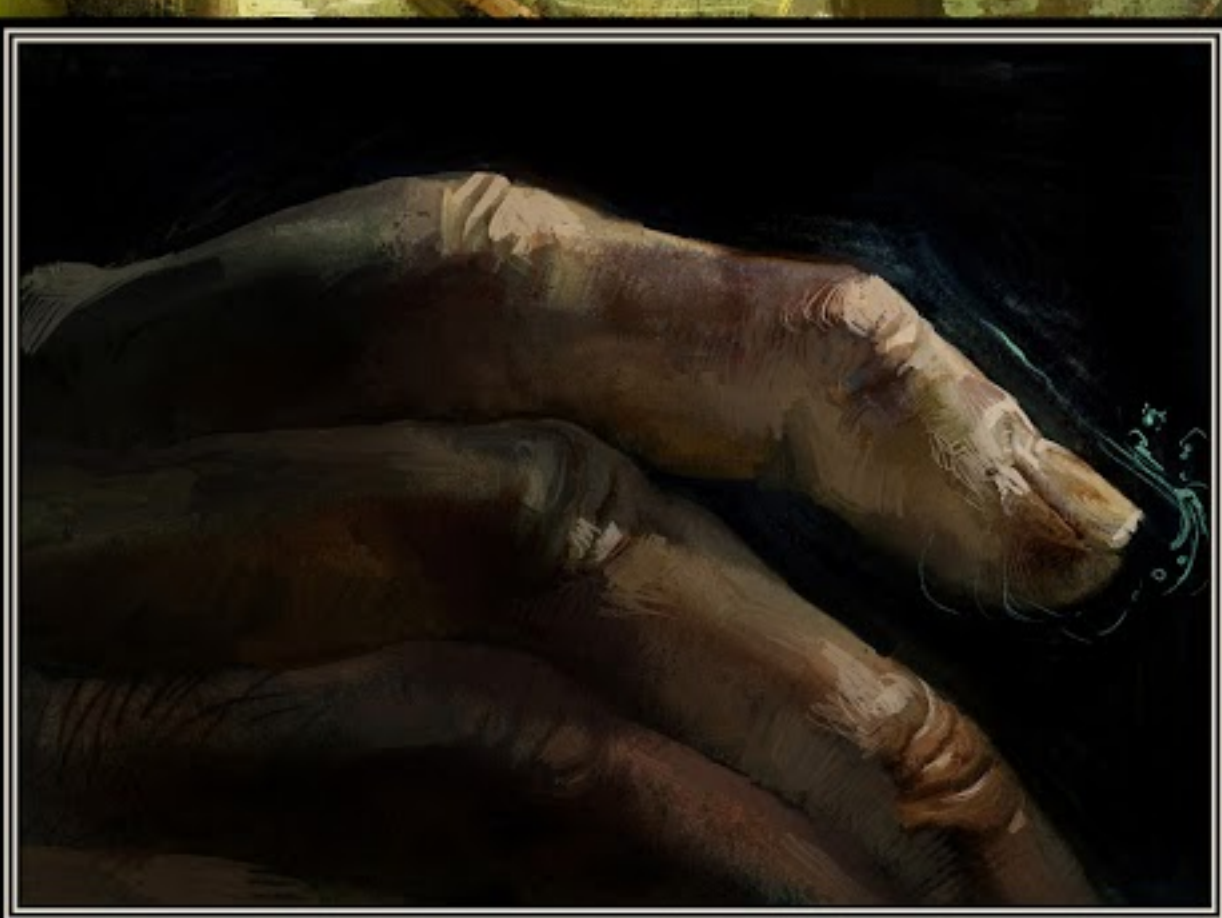
JUST
REST
EASY.

I TURNED
HIM DOWN.
IT WAS JOB
MADE THE DEAL.
IT WAS JOB
WHO SHOULD
HAVE
LIVED.

JOB IS LAID
UP ON A BOARD IN
MY OFFICE.

FOR GOOD
OR ILL THE OLD
BASTARD HAS
BREADED HIS
LAST...

"...SO UNLESS JESUS
CHRIST HIMSELF
PASSES BY TO RAISE
HIM, WE'LL SEE NO
MORE OF OL' JOB."







HOW DOES IT FEEL?

DOES YOUR NEW FLESH SUIT YOU?

IT FEELS LIKE DEAD MEAT.



IT'S DONE THEN? NO TURNING BACK?

A DEAL IS A DEAL. YOU BELONG TO MALEBOLGIA NOW.

HERE. TAKE A LOOK IN THIS GLASS.



YOU BEAR THE MARK OF YOUR MASTER.

AN AWFUL SIGHT ISN'T IT?

IT SUITS ME FINE.
IT'S THE LAST SIGHT THOSE SONS OF BITCHES WILL EVER SEE.



I'VE BROUGHT YOUR CLOTHES AND YOUR WEAPONS.

WITH THE RECENT DEATHS ACCOUNTED FOR, THE POPULATION OF BANE STANDS AT TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SEVEN.

YOU THINK TWENTY-FOUR HOURS WILL BE ENOUGH?



START THE CLOCK, FRIEND...



...LET THE
KILLING
COMMENCE!

To Be Continued...





SPAWN®

HINE
CANSINO
VAN DYKE

GUNSLINGER SPAWN: PART 2



ISSUE 175 DIGITAL EDITION

SPAWN.COM

A PRIVATE ROOM IN THE LUCKY STRIKE - BANE'S POPULAR SALOON AND CATHOUSE.

DID YOU
SEE THE WAY OL' JOB
WRIGGLED, LIKE A TROUT
ON A HOOK.

I SAW
THE MEN
WHO HANGED
HIM, RUNNING
LIKE RABBITS AS
SOON AS THE
MARSHAL
SHOWED HIS
FACE.

NOW
COME ON
IN HERE,
'LESS YOU
WANNA BE
PAYING ME
DOUBLE
TIME.

GOT
SOMETHING
SPECIAL
FOR YOU,
NANCY.

I
DOUBT
IT.

EVER
HAD A
HANGMAN
IN YOUR
BED?

NOOO!!

I DO
BELIEVE THE
LADY IS
IMPRESSED.

I'LL TAKE
CREDIT FOR
THAT.



ONCE YOU ACQUIRE OL' JOB'S LAND, YOU'LL HAVE YOURSELF QUITE A MONOPOLY, ED.

WHAT'S GOOD FOR ME IS GOOD FOR BANE. THIS TOWN IS GOING TO PROSPER AND YOUR BANK ALONG WITH IT, ROY.



-THE HELL WAS THAT?



CARL'S UPSTAIRS WITH NANCY.

DOES HE ALWAYS FIRE OFF HIS CANNON WHEN HE'S HAVING HIS WAY WITH A DOXIE?

GO UP THERE AND TELL HIM TO HOLD HIS NOISE.



A PITY THAT COLORED SOLDIER LIVED. WHAT WAS HE DOING OUT AT OL' JOB'S PLACE ANYHOW?

LORD KNOWS. I DON'T PLAN TO LOSE ANY SLEEP OVER IT.



WHAT IN HELL-?

IS THIS SOMEONE'S DAMN' FOOL IDEA OF A JOKE?



TH-THAT'S CARL'S MASK!



I TOLD
YOU I'D SEE
YOU IN HELL,
KEMPER.

JUST DIDN'T HAVE
THE PATIENCE TO WAIT
ON YOU DYING, SO I
BROUGHT HELL ALONG
WITH ME FOR YOUR
CONVENIENCE.

OL' JOB
YOU CALLED ME.
WELL, HERES A
NEW SCRIPTURE
FOR YOU.

I AM RETURNED
TO CAST ABROAD
THE RAGE OF MY
WRATH! RETURNED
TO TREAD THE
WICKED IN THEIR
PLACE!!

HERE'S YOUR HANGMAN,
SAVED FROM THE SIN OF
FORNICATION!

OH LORD,
IS THAT THING
OL' JOB'S
GHOST?

I DON'T
GIVE A DAMN
WHAT IT IS.

JUST
SHOOT THE
BASTARD!

Blam! **BLAMM!**

Ka-
BLAM!!

KA-
POW!

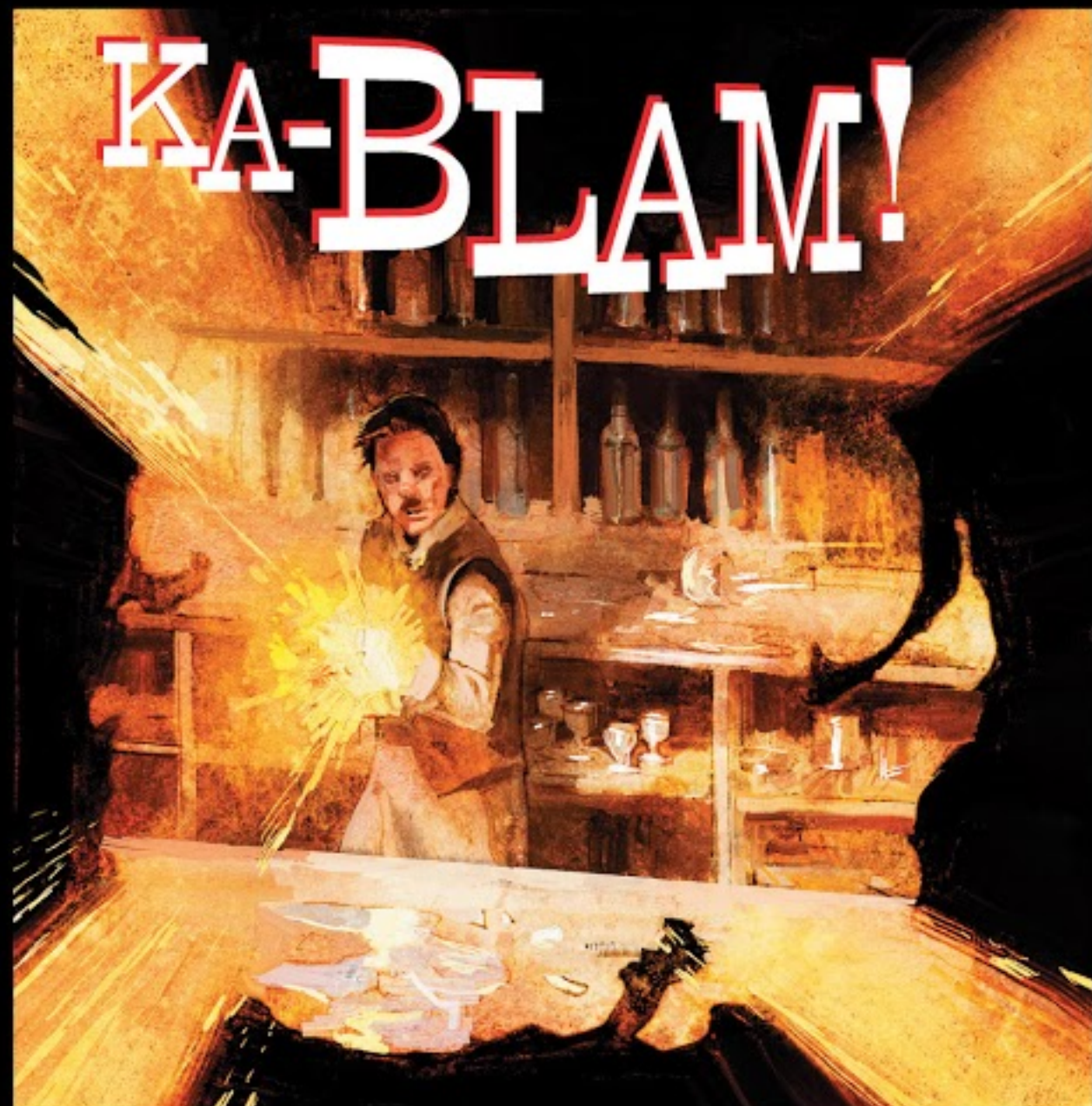
Pow!
POW!

KA-
BLAM!

FINE SHOOTING
GENTLEMEN!

THERE'S THE
LIVING PROOF!
YOU CAN'T KILL A
CORPSE!









nnn-
uuunnh

LAYING IN MY PRISON CELL, I DRIFTED IN AND OUT OF A TROUBLED SLEEP. I DREAMED THE LYNCHMEN WERE HANGING ME ONCE MORE.

I DREAMED OF THE MAN IN WHITE AND HIS OFFER TO CHEAT DEATH FOR THE PRICE OF ONE ETERNAL SOUL...



I WOKE TO THE SOUND OF DISTANT GUNFIRE.

JOB!

SETTLE BACK SON. THAT'LL BE THE SATURDAY NIGHT ROWDIES LETTING OFF STEAM.



-MINE'S A HEALING PROFESSION, MARSHAL. I'VE NEVER HANDLED A GUN.



I'LL HAVE TO LEAVE YOU, DOC. I'LL SEND SILAS BACK HERE IF I COME ACROSS HIM.

ANYONE TRIES TO COME IN HERE, YOU TAKE ONE OF THOSE RIFLES FROM THE RACK-



OH JESUS AND MARY, THE SALOON IS ON FIRE!

THAT'S NO KIND OF FIRE I'VE EVER SEEN.









COME OUT,
KEMPER! I
SMELL YOUR
STINK!

DAMNED
IF YOU
DIDN'T PISS
YOURSELF
BACK
THERE.

I NEVER
KILLED A
HUMAN BEING
FOR THE PLEASURE
OF IT, JOB, IF THAT'S
WHO YOU TRULY
ARE. YOUR WIFE
AND CHILD WERE
NOT INTENDED
TO DIE.

FOR
WHAT IT'S
WORTH,
I'M SORRY
FOR IT.



NOW
GET THE
HELL
OUT OF
MY
TOWN!













IT SEEMS FATE IS ALWAYS READY TO TAKE WITH ONE HAND AS IT GIVES WITH THE OTHER. JUST AS I FELT HOPE RISE WITHIN ME, IT WAS SNATCHED AWAY FROM ME ONCE MORE.



IF EVER A MAN CAN BE SAID TO HAVE LOOKED DEATH IN THE FACE, THEN I AM THAT MAN.



NOT HIM!
YOU MAY KILL THEM
ALL TO THE LAST
SQUALLING INFANT,
BUT NOT HIM.



OL' JOB SEEMED RELUCTANT TO DO HIS MASTER'S BIDDING. HIS FINGERS TIGHTENED ON MY THROAT...



...AND I SLIPPED ONCE MORE INTO OBLIVION.



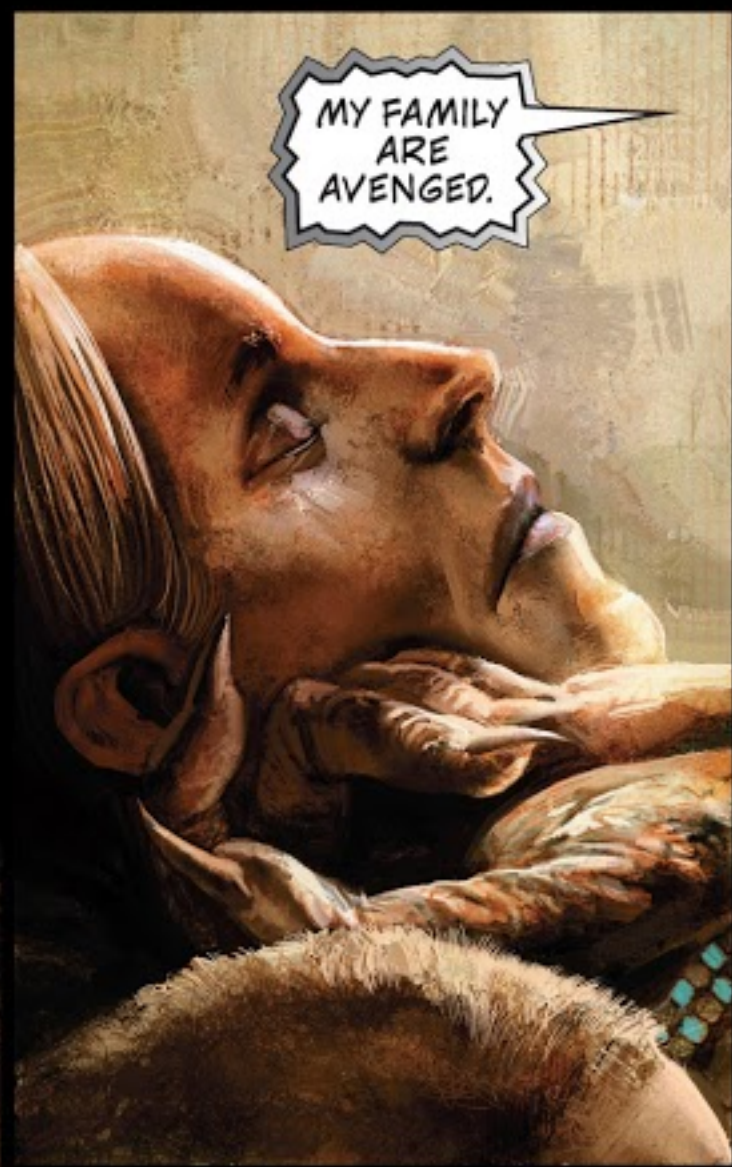
WHERE--
--WHERE
AM I?



WELL, IT
SURELY ISN'T
HEAVEN.

HE WAS RIGHT
TO SPARE YOU. OF
ALL PEOPLE IN THIS
TOWN YOU ARE
INNOCENT OF
THIS CRIME.

YOU HAVE
NOTHING
MORE TO
FEAR FROM
ME.



MY FAMILY
ARE
AVENGED.



THEN
YOU'LL
KILL NO
MORE?

THERE ARE
NONE LEFT.



YOU KILLED
THEM ALL?
MY GOD EVEN
THE CHILD-

SHHH.
DON'T SPEAK.
I'M GOING TO
TAKE YOU OUT OF
HERE. YOU'D DO
BEST NOT TO RILE
ME OR I MAY
FORGET THAT I'M
TO LET YOU
LIVE.



AND SO I LEFT THE
TOWN OF BANE.

FOR ALL HIS STRENGTH, JOB
LABORED AS IF THE COFFIN
BORE ALL THE WEIGHT OF HIS SINS.

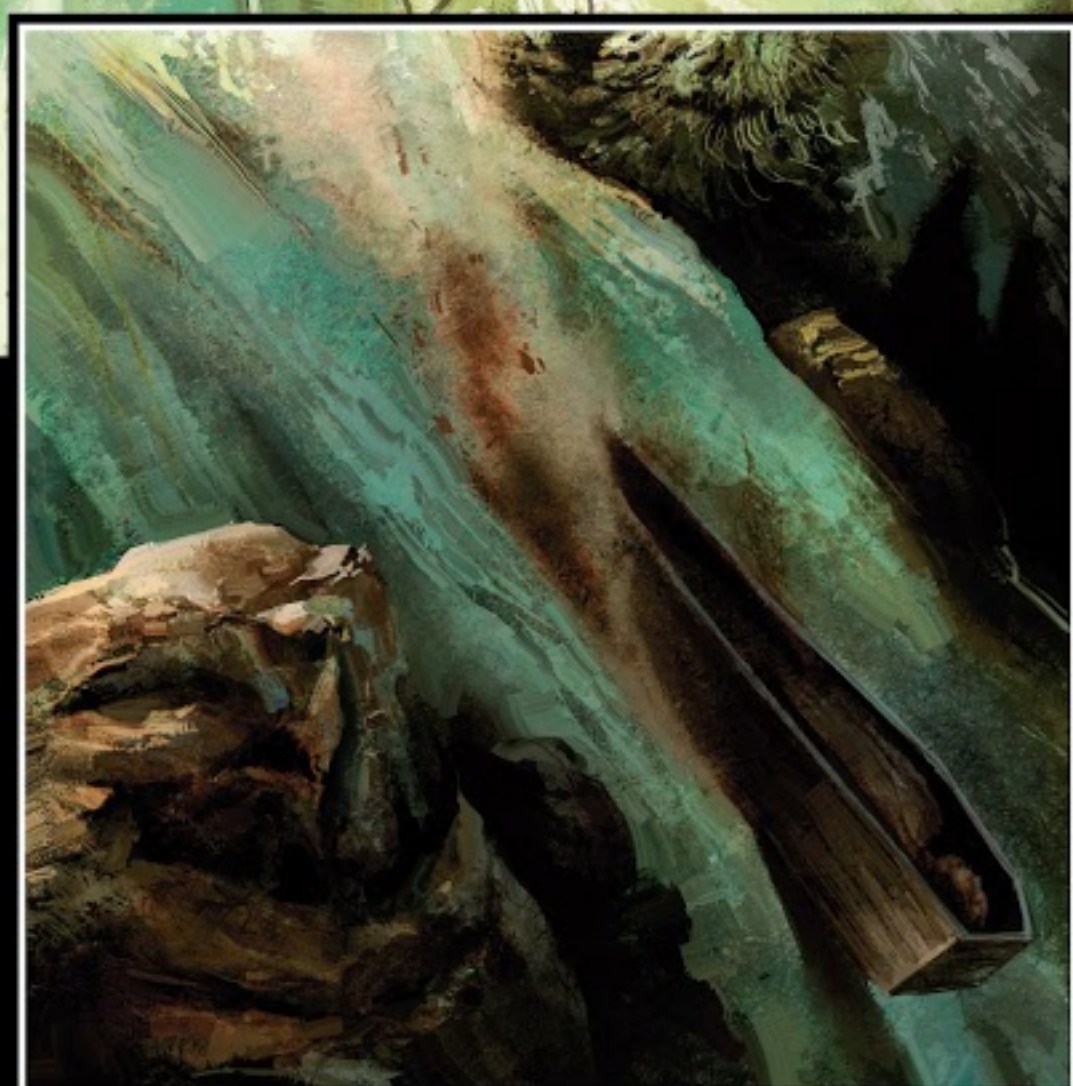


...AND HIS SINS
WERE MANY.



I'LL SAY
FAREWELL
THEN.

PERHAPS
YOU'LL
REMEMBER
ME IN YOUR
PRAYERS.



THAT WAS THE LAST
I SAW OF THE
PITIFUL CREATURE THAT
HAD BEEN OL' JOB.



I HOPE
YOU ARE
NOT TOO
SHAKEN BY
YOUR
DESCENT.



DON'T
WORRY, I
DON'T INTEND
TO USE THIS
ON YOU. YOU
ARE FAR TOO
PRECIOUS
TO ME.

PRECIOUS?
BUT I'M NOT THE
ONE YOU WERE
LOOKING FOR. IT
WAS JOB WHO
TOOK UP YOUR
OFFER.



YOU SAID
THERE COULD
BE ONLY
ONE.

YES. IN EACH
GENERATION THERE
CAN BE ONLY ONE
HELLSPAWN. BUT I AM
NEVER WRONG. I
REALIZE NOW, WHY
YOU WERE BROUGHT
TO ME.



ONE DAY
THERE WILL BE A
HELLSPAWN GREATER
THAN ALL THE OTHERS.
ONE WHO WILL MAKE
THIS WHOLE WORLD
WHAT JOB HAS MADE
OF BANE.

THE SEED IS
IN YOU. I BELIEVE
ONE OF YOUR FORE-
BEARS WILL STAND
BY ME AND RULE
THIS WORLD.



GO TO
HER. GO TO
YOUR ALMA.
HAVE CHILDREN.
I'M A PATIENT
MAN.

I CAN
WAIT.



*IN THE COFFIN
THERE WAS A
FOLDED SHEET
OF PAPER. A BILL
MADE OUT TO THE
WIDOW OF THE
MAN FOR WHOM
IT WAS INTENDED.*



*HENRY
THOMAS
SIMMONS.*

*I TOOK THE DEAD MAN'S
NAME AWAY WITH ME AND
IT WAS AS HENRY SIMMONS
THAT I MARRIED ALMA.*



*I NEVER SAW THE MAN IN WHITE AGAIN BUT
NOW MY WIFE IS EXPECTING OUR FIRSTBORN AND
A TERRIBLE DREAD HAS DESCENDED UPON ME.*



*I WRITE THIS FOR YOU MY
CHILDREN FOR MY GRAND-
CHILDREN, FOR ALL MY
GENERATIONS TO COME.*



*I KNOW THAT
ONE DAY HE WILL
RETURN TO MAKE
THE OFFER I
REFUSED.*

*THIS IS MY
WARNING.
YOU MUST
TURN YOUR
BACK ON HIM.
TO ACCEPT HIS
PACT IS WORSE
THAN DEATH.*

*THE PROMISE HE MAKES
YOU MAY TASTE SWEET
ON YOUR TONGUE...*

*...BUT THE
BITTER
AFTERTASTE
WILL
LAST FOR
ETERNITY.*



The End





SPAWN®

HINE
HABERLIN
VAN DYKE

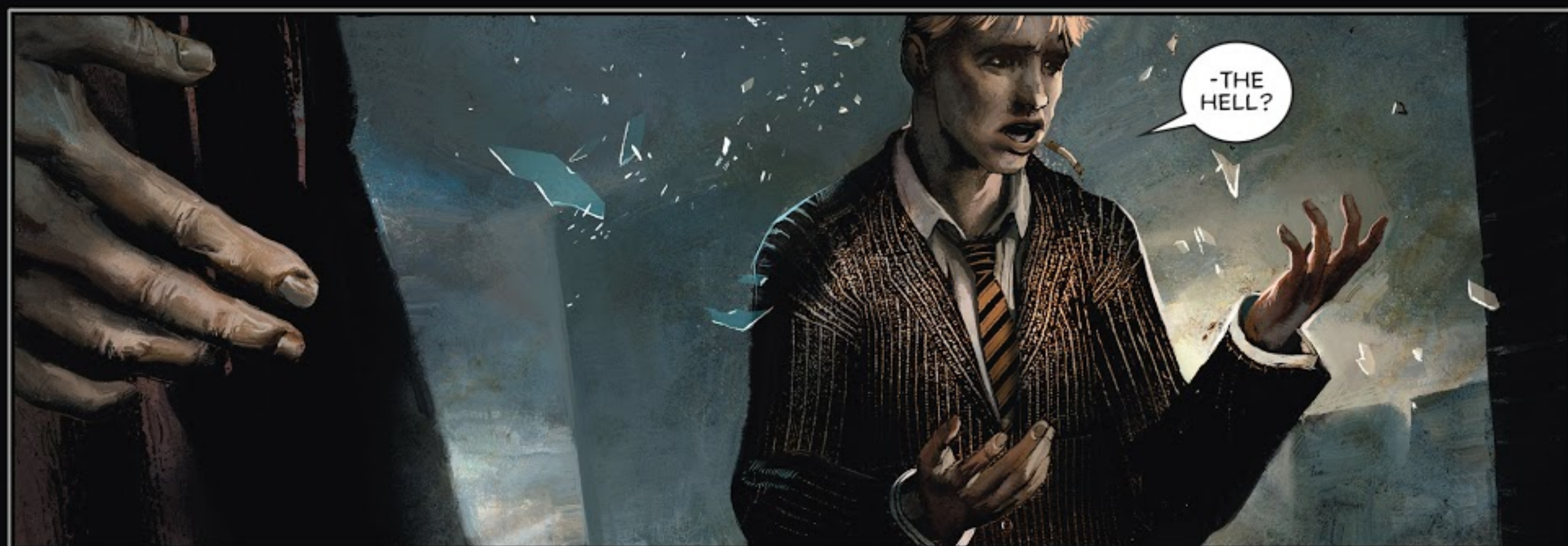
THE MONSTER IN THE BUBBLE: PART 1



ISSUE 176 DIGITAL EDITION

SPAWN.COM

Capullo





EIGHTEEN HOURS AGO.

TWO
HUNDRED
YEARS!!

MAMMON
HAS BEEN
SCREWING WITH
MY FAMILY FOR
OVER TWO
HUNDRED
YEARS!

THE SIMMONS' HOME.

IF I HAD WARNED
YOU--IF I HAD SHOWN YOU
MY GRANDFATHER'S JOURNAL
LIKE I WAS SUPPOSED TO,
THIS WOULD NEVER HAVE
HAPPENED TO YOU.

I'D GIVE
MY LIFE TO GO
BACK-

-YOU
SHOULD BE
PROUD. OUR
SON WAS
CHOSEN TO BE
HONORED
ABOVE ALL
MEN...

HONORED?!

MY
GRANDFATHER
WAS AN HONORABLE
MAN. HE WOULD
RATHER HAVE **DIED**
THAN BECOME
WHAT I AM.

MARC
SAW MAMMON
FOR WHAT HE WAS,
RIGHT FROM THE
START.

MARC
WAS THE
BEST OF
US.

MARC?



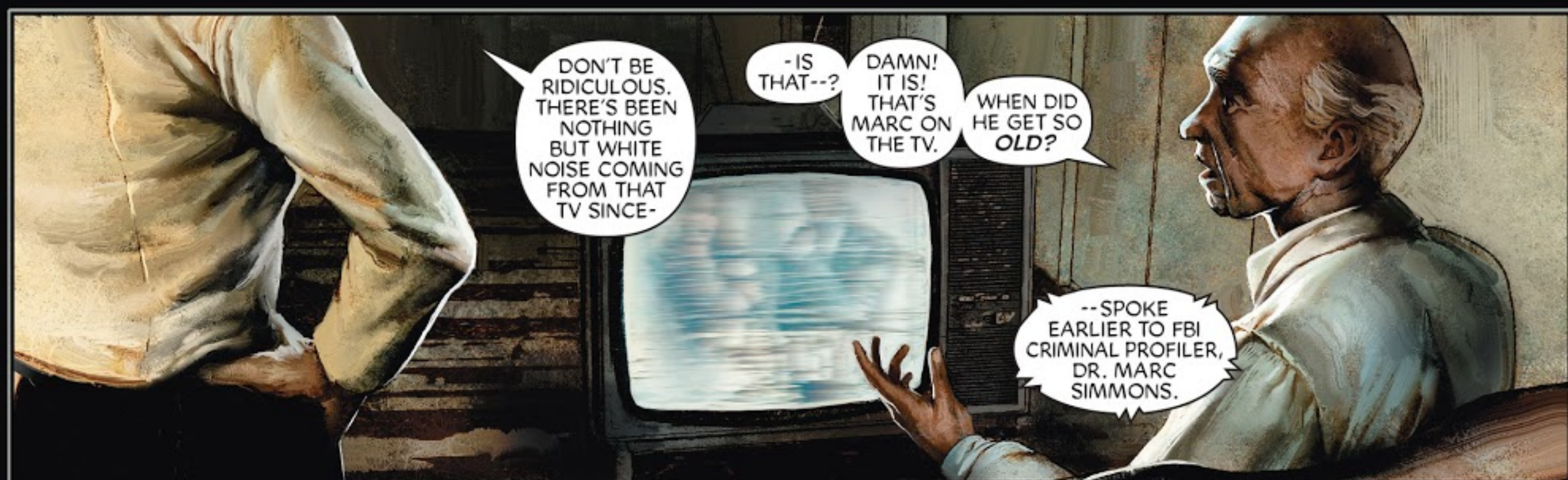
SSS-SS-
THE-CRIME
SCENE-SS-
SSSS



SS-
SSS-MAY
BE THE THIRD
MURDER-SSSS-
SSS

LOOK
AT
THAT.

TV'S
WORKING.



DON'T BE
RIDICULOUS.
THERE'S BEEN
NOTHING
BUT WHITE
NOISE COMING
FROM THAT
TV SINCE-

-IS
THAT--?

DAMN!
IT IS!
THAT'S
MARC ON
THE TV.

WHEN DID
HE GET SO
OLD?

--SPOKE
EARLIER TO FBI
CRIMINAL PROFILER,
DR. MARC
SIMMONS.



YOU HEAR
THAT? A
DOCTOR!

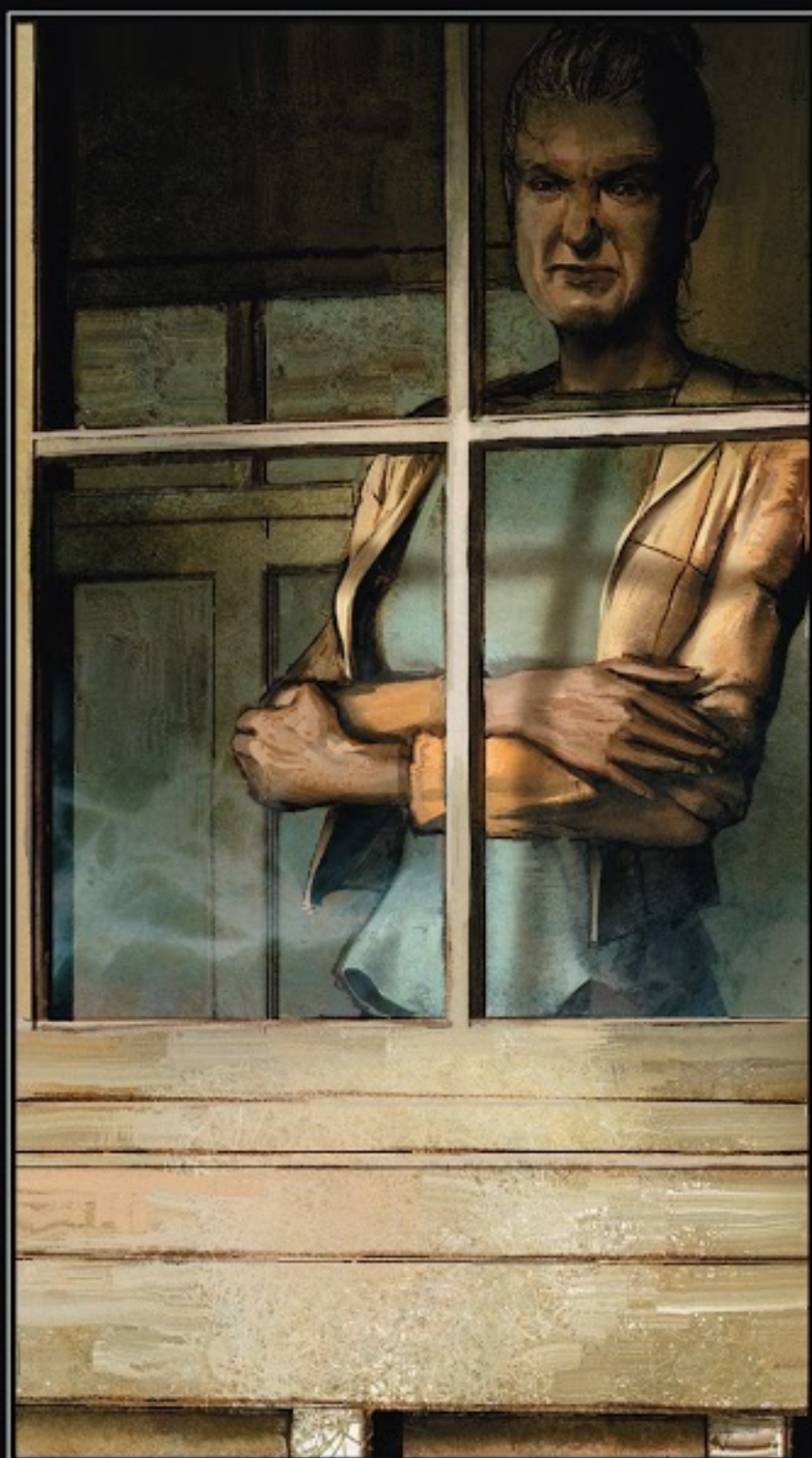
DR. SIMMONS,
WE HAVE THREE
BIZARRE SLAYINGS,
ONE IN OMAHA, ONE
IN LOS ANGELES AND
NOW ONE HERE IN
SEATTLE.

CAN YOU SHED
ANY LIGHT ON
WHO OR WHAT IS
RESPONSIBLE?



IT'S TOO EARLY
FOR ME TO DRAW ANY
CONCLUSIONS, BUT I CAN
ASSURE YOU THAT, CONTRARY
TO THE IMAGINATIVE THEORIES
BEING BANDIED ABOUT BY
THE MEDIA, THIS IS MOST
DEFINITELY A "WHO?"
NOT A "WHAT?".

WE'RE DEALING
WITH A SICK HUMAN
BEING. I DON'T BELIEVE
IN GHOSTS OR DEMONS
OR THE SUPER-
NATURAL.





SEATTLE. THE APARTMENT OF
JAVIER MARTINEZ, DECEASED.

WE BAGGED
MARTINEZ IN
39 SEPARATE
PIECES.

ANYTHING
MISSING?

WE DON'T
KNOW YET.
PATHOLOGY IS
STITCHING HIM
BACK TOGETHER
AS WE SPEAK.

IT COULD
TAKE A
WHILE.



FROM THE
APARTMENT,
DETECTIVE. WAS
ANYTHING TAKEN
FROM THE
APARTMENT?

THERE'S
INTERRUPTION OF
SPLATTER MARKS THAT
SUGGESTS SOMETHING
WAS REMOVED FROM
THIS SHELF.



THE
APARTMENT
WAS LOCKED
FROM THE INSIDE,
DOOR AND
WINDOWS. NO
SIGNS OF FORCED
ENTRY. NO OBVI-
OUS METHOD OF
EGRESS. CLASSIC
LOCKED ROOM
MYSTERY.

THERE'S A
LOT OF MUCUS
AROUND THE PLACE
TOO. I'D GUESS
NOT OF HUMAN
ORIGIN.









WHAT ARE YOU?

WHY ARE YOU KILLING THESE PEOPLE?

I DIDN'T KILL THEM.



YOU DON'T NEED THE GUN, MARC.

EVERYTHING'S OKAY.

I-- I-- HAVE TO ARREST--

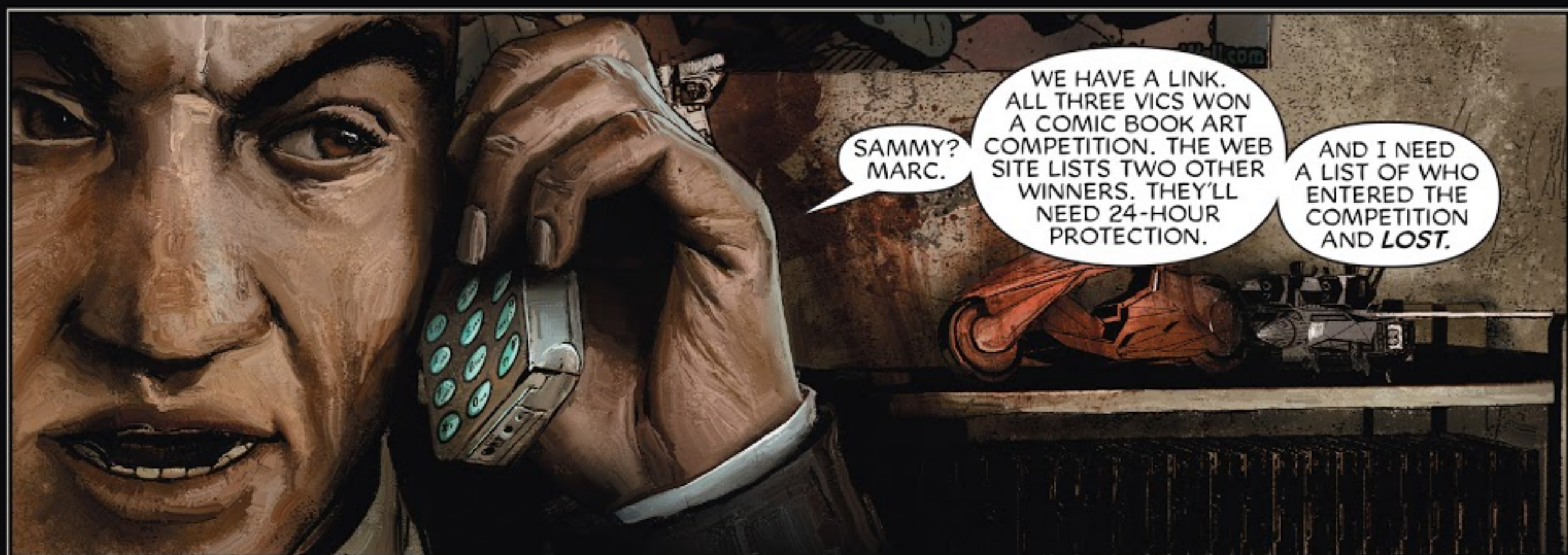
LOOK AT HIM.

DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE HIM?



THE WHITE LIGHT--IT WAS YOU--THE ANGEL WHO ENDED IT.





MOUNT PLEASANT
HOSPITAL, PORTLAND.

THIS IS
RIDICULOUS! IT'S
RIDICULOUS AND
OFFENSIVE!

DO YOU HAVE
ANY IDEA WHAT IT
MEANS TO SUFFER
FROM EXTREME
COMBINED IMMUNO-
DEFICIENCY?

YEAH, I
LOOKED
IT UP.

IT'S NOT
GOOD.

YET YOU STILL
INSIST THAT KENNETH ERSKINE
IS A SUSPECT. THAT HE SOME-
HOW TRAVELED 150 MILES TO
SEATTLE, COMMITTED A
BRUTAL MURDER-

-I DIDN'T
SAY THAT.
BUT WE DO
HAVE EVIDENCE
THAT POINTS TO HIS
HAVING SOME
KNOWLEDGE
OF THE
MURDERS.

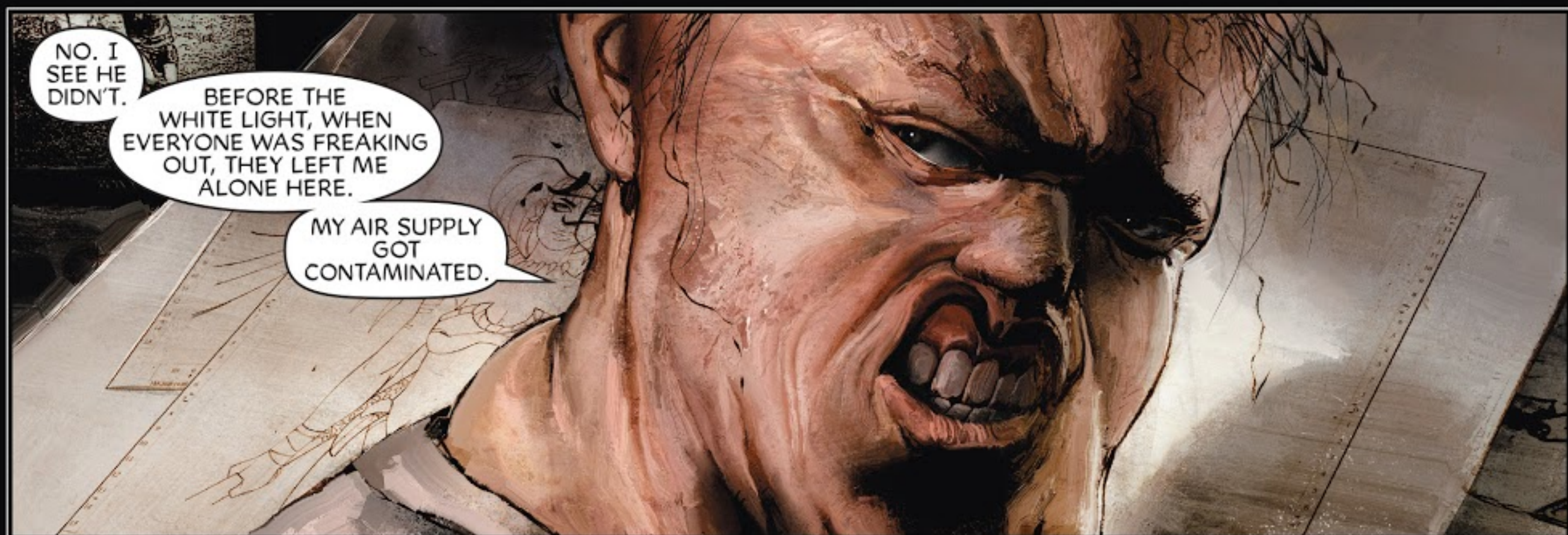
KENNETH
HASN'T SET FOOT
OUTSIDE HIS ISOLATOR
SINCE HE WAS SIX
MONTHS OLD. FOR
SEVENTEEN YEARS HE
HAS BEEN CONSTANTLY
MONITORED.

HE IS SO
SUSCEPTIBLE TO
BACTERIA THAT
CONTACT WITH
ANOTHER HUMAN
BEING WOULD
KILL HIM.

CONTACT
WITH
UNFILTERED **AIR**
WOULD KILL
HIM.

THIS BOY'S
ALIBI IS QUITE
LITERALLY AIR
TIGHT.

YOU'VE
MADE YOUR
POINT,
DOCTOR.





THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ENTERED THAT COMPETITION. I'M REALLY INTERESTED TO KNOW HOW YOU CAME UP WITH MY PROFILE.

YOU'VE GOT A KILLER WHO TRAVELS ACROSS HALF THE COUNTRY, RIPS PEOPLE INTO PIECES AND THEN ESCAPES FROM A LOCKED ROOM ON THE FIFTH FLOOR.

NOW WHO COULD THAT BE?

OH, I KNOW-



THE CRIPPLED KID WHO'S NEVER WALKED MORE THAN TEN YARDS FROM WHERE HE'S STANDING IN HIS ENTIRE LIFE!!

BRILLIANT DEDUCTION, SHERLOCK.

EXCUSE ME, I HAVE TO TAKE THIS.

Ba-da-ba-da-Ba-da



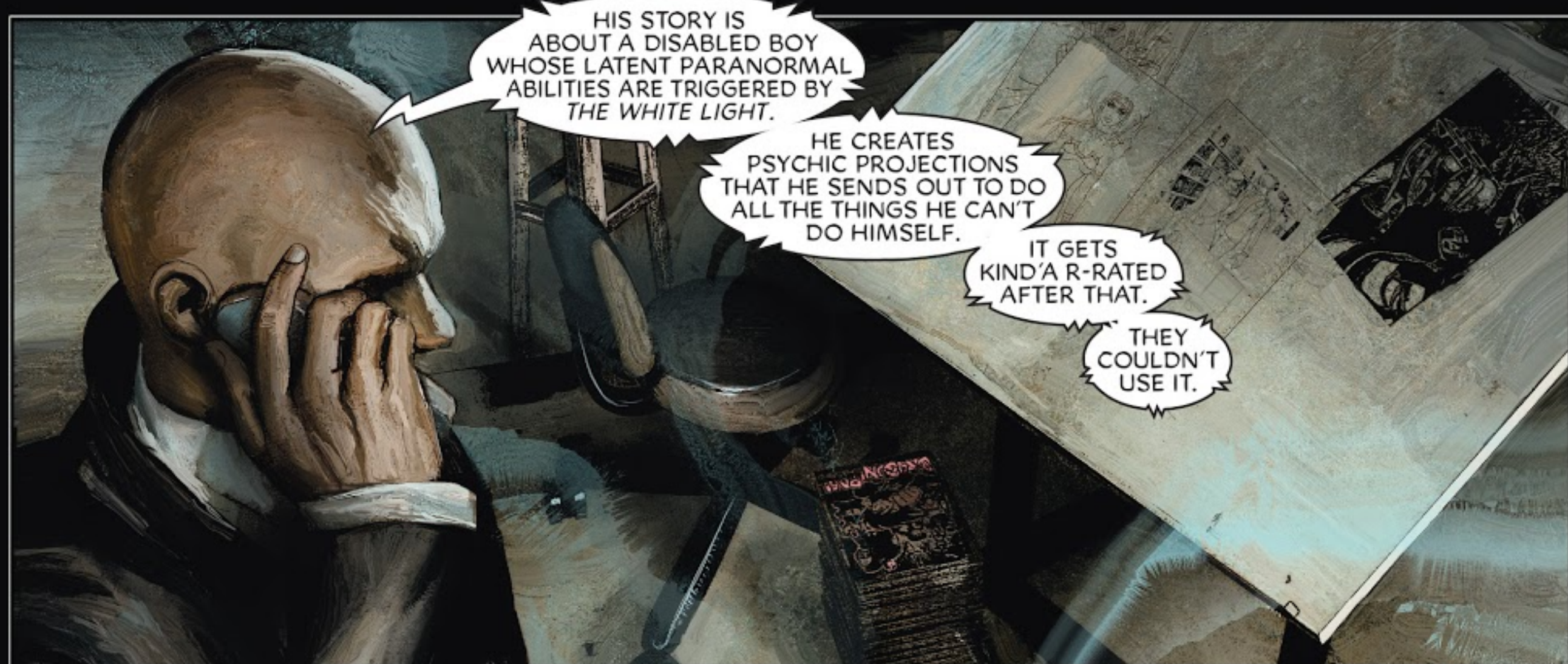
SAMMY, WHAT DO YOU HAVE?

I'VE TALKED TO THE PEOPLE AT TOKYOBLAST. WE HAVE ADDRESSES FOR THE TWO SURVIVING COMPETITION WINNERS-

--KIMBERLEY MANSON AND BUD HOSER. THERE ARE AGENTS ON THE WAY TO THEM.



WHAT ABOUT KENNETH ERSKINE?



HIS STORY IS ABOUT A DISABLED BOY WHOSE LATENT PARANORMAL ABILITIES ARE TRIGGERED BY THE WHITE LIGHT.

HE CREATES PSYCHIC PROJECTIONS THAT HE SENDS OUT TO DO ALL THE THINGS HE CAN'T DO HIMSELF.

IT GETS KIND'A R-RATED AFTER THAT.

THEY COULDN'T USE IT.



IS THIS
STRANGE
ENOUGH FOR
YOU?

AND BY
THE WAY, DID I
TELL YOU HOW
MUCH I **HATE**
YOUR CRAPPY
MANGA?

AIEEEEE

beep--
HI, KIMBERLEY
IS WORKING,
OR SLEEPING, OR
SHOPPING, OR
WHATEVER--
TALK OR
HANG UP--



KIMBERLEY,
THIS IS DETECTIVE
JAMES REILLY. I NEED
TO SPEAK TO YOU URGENTLY.
I'M DOWNSTAIRS RIGHT
NOW, SO IF YOU'RE THERE,
I WANT YOU TO PICK UP
THE PHONE AND THEN
LET US IN.





SCORE ONE FOR MARC! HE WAS RIGHT ABOUT ERSKINE.

WHA-? WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

LET HER GO, KENNETH.

I'M YOUR WORST NIGHTMARE, KENNETH. I PROTECT PEOPLE FROM SCUM LIKE YOU.

SO YOU WANT ME TO LET HER GO?

NO PROBLEM!

YAAAAAAAAA

KERASH









NEXT MONTH: THE SHOCKING CONCLUSION TO 'THE MONSTER IN THE BUBBLE.'





SPAWN®

HINE
HABERLIN
NOORA

THE MONSTER IN THE BUBBLE: PART 2

ISSUE 177 DIGITAL EDITION
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OH MAN!
THIS IS SUCH
GREAT
FOOTAGE.



THE NEWS
CHANNELS ARE
GONNA BE ALL
OVER ME.



I SHOULD
GET AN AGENT.
THIS WILL GO
WORLDWIDE.

I COULD
RETIRE ON THE
ROYALTIES.



WHAT
THE HELL
ARE YOU
DOING?!



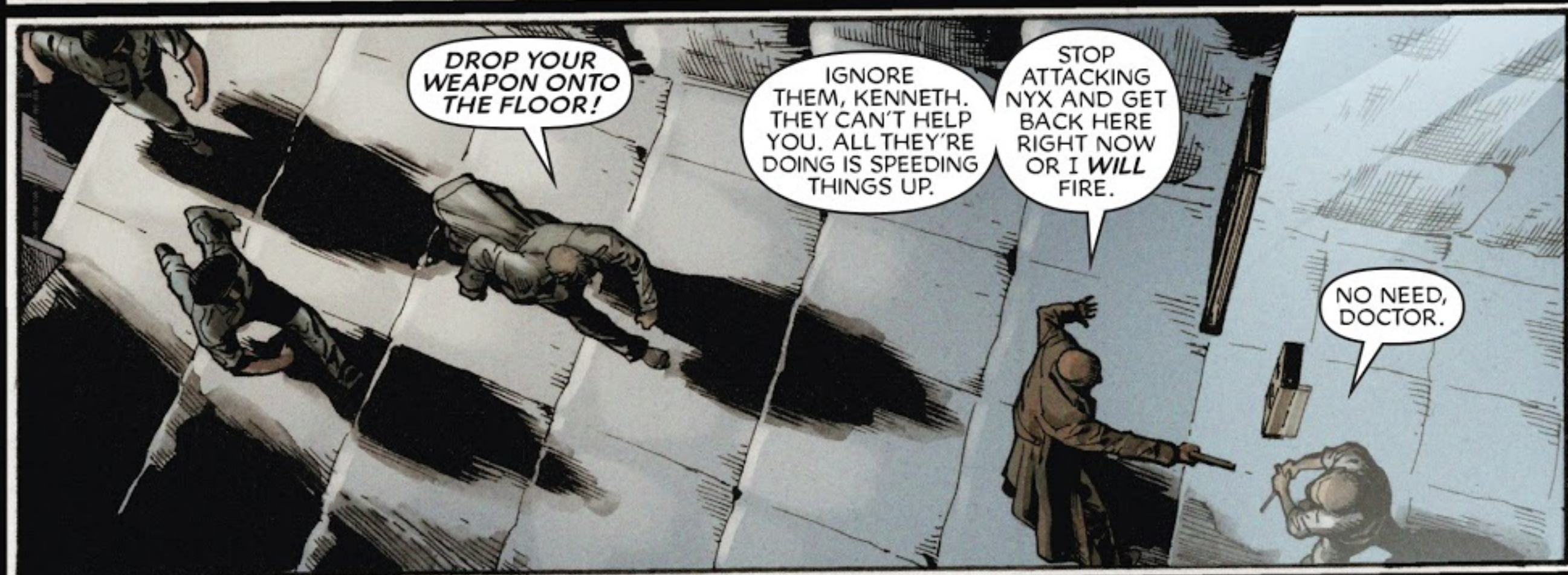
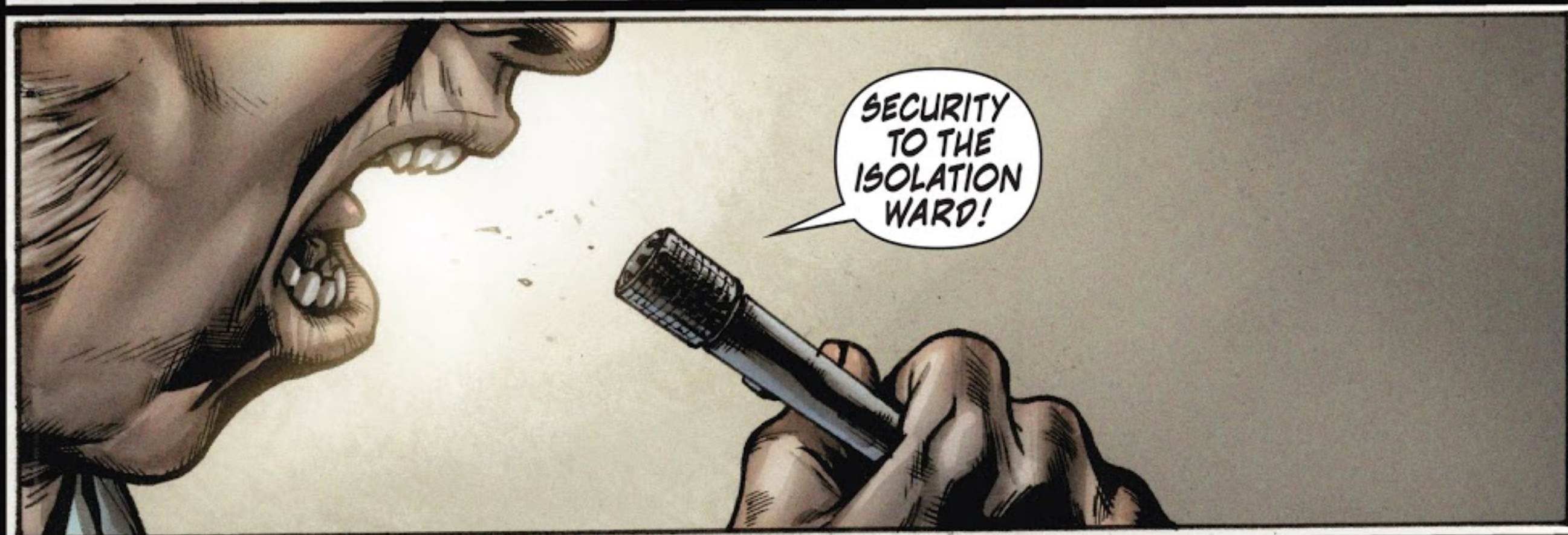
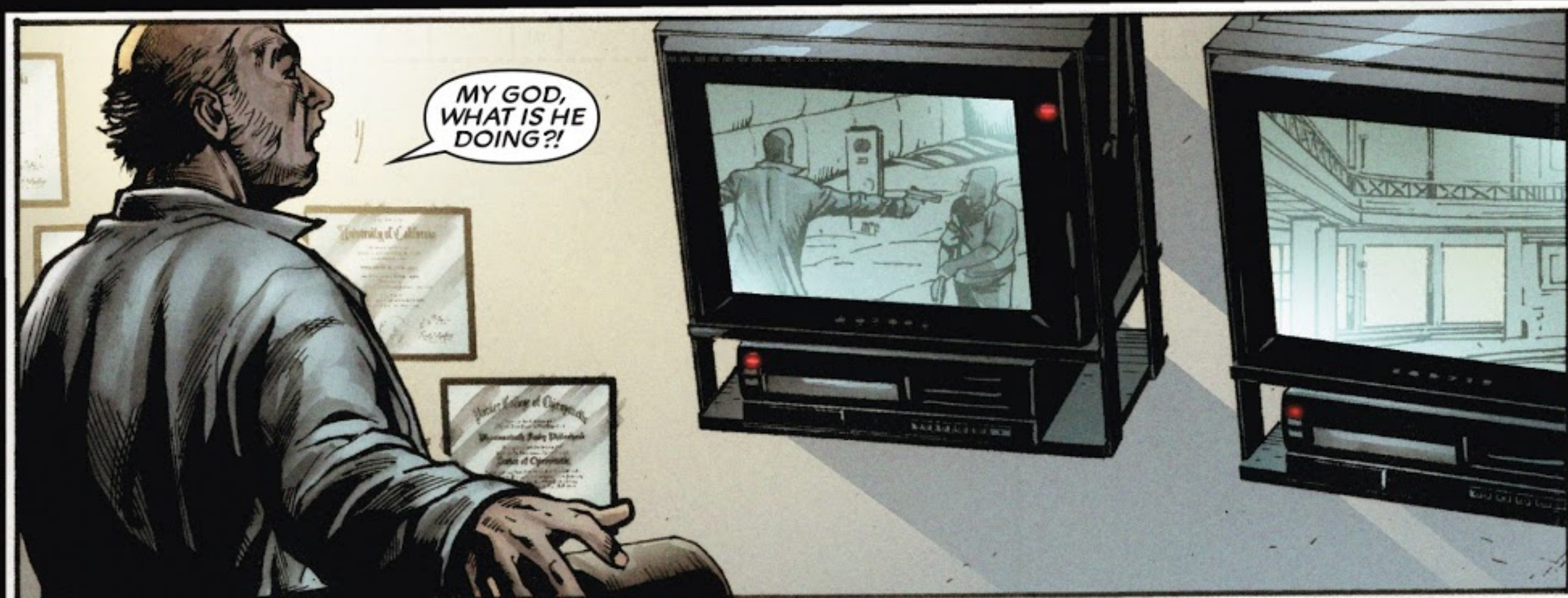


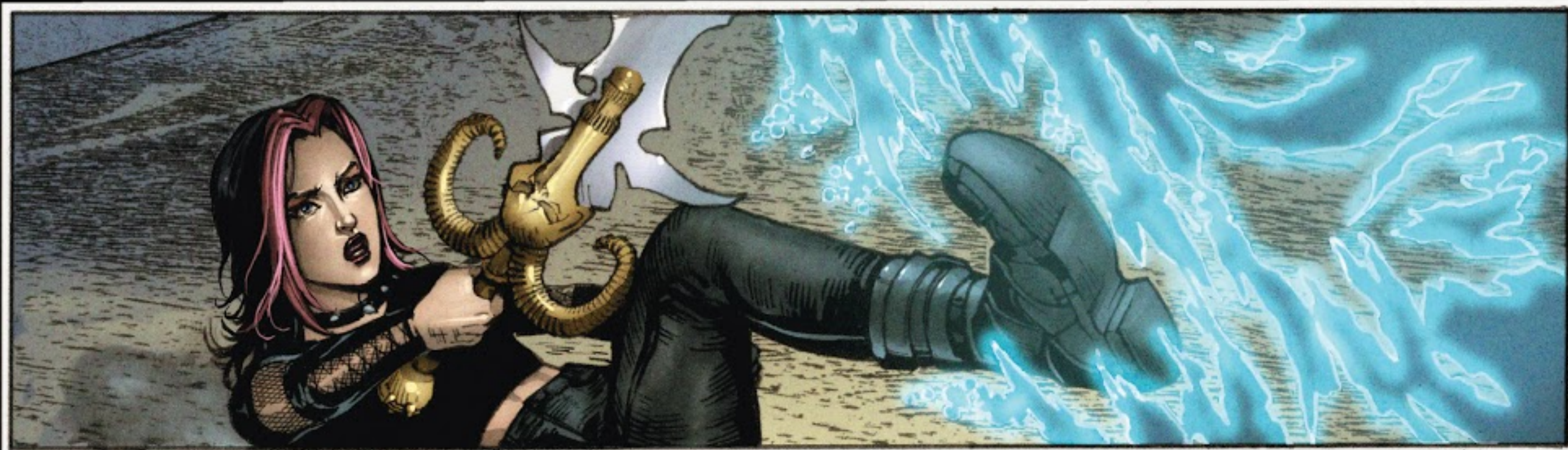


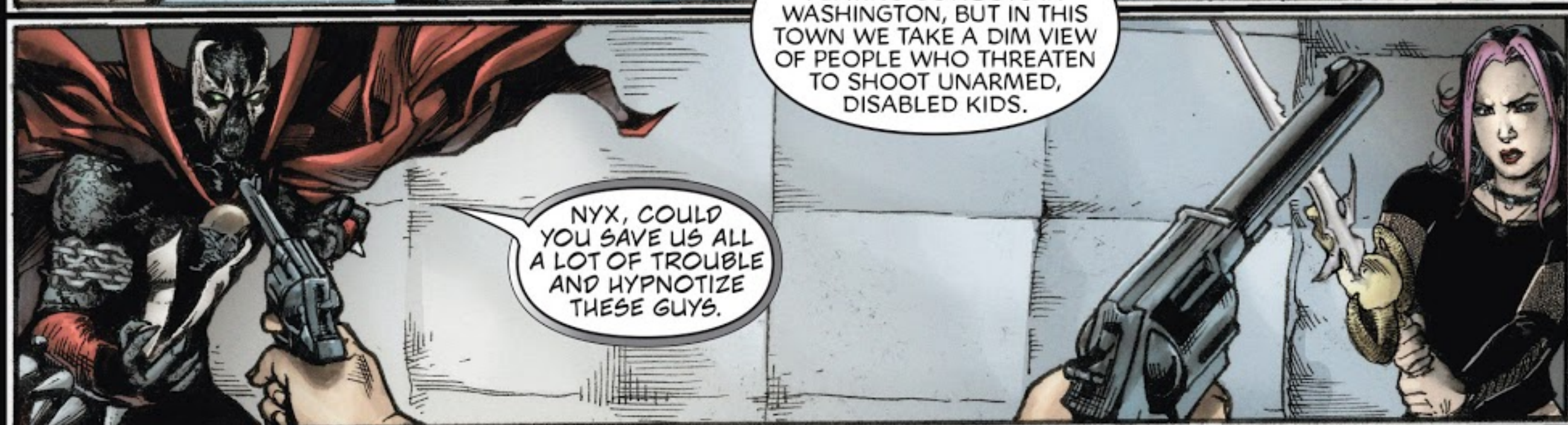


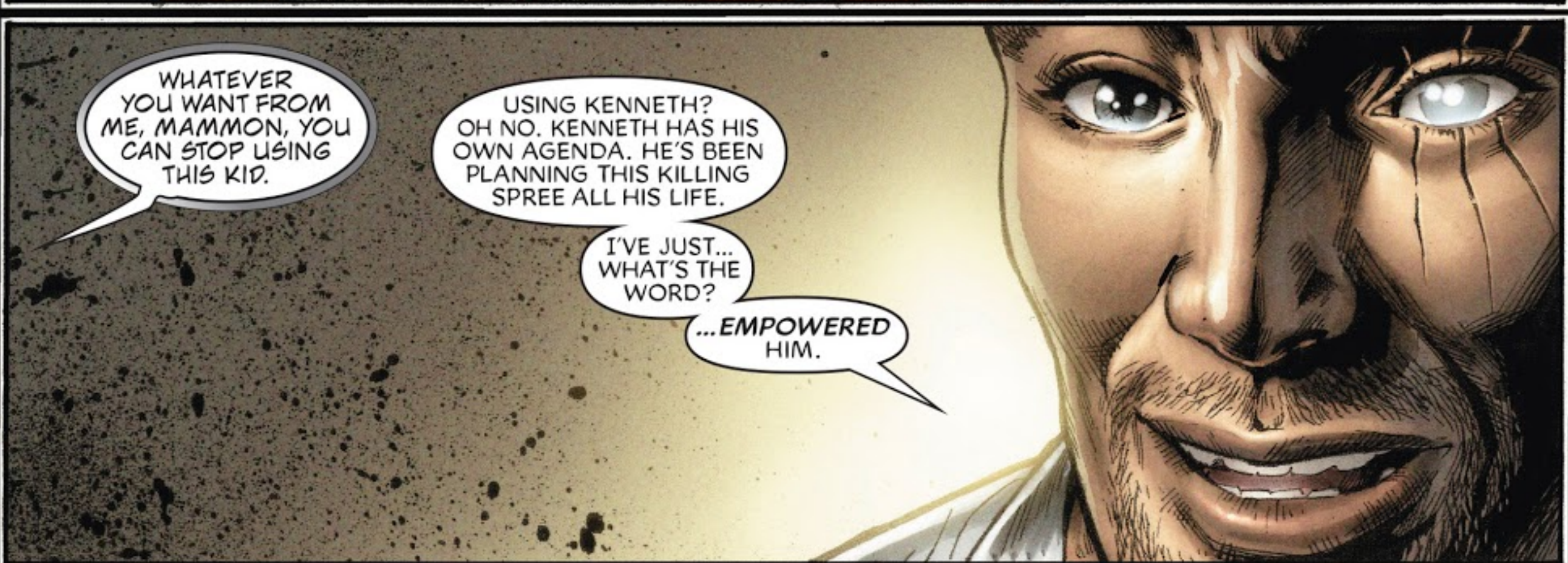


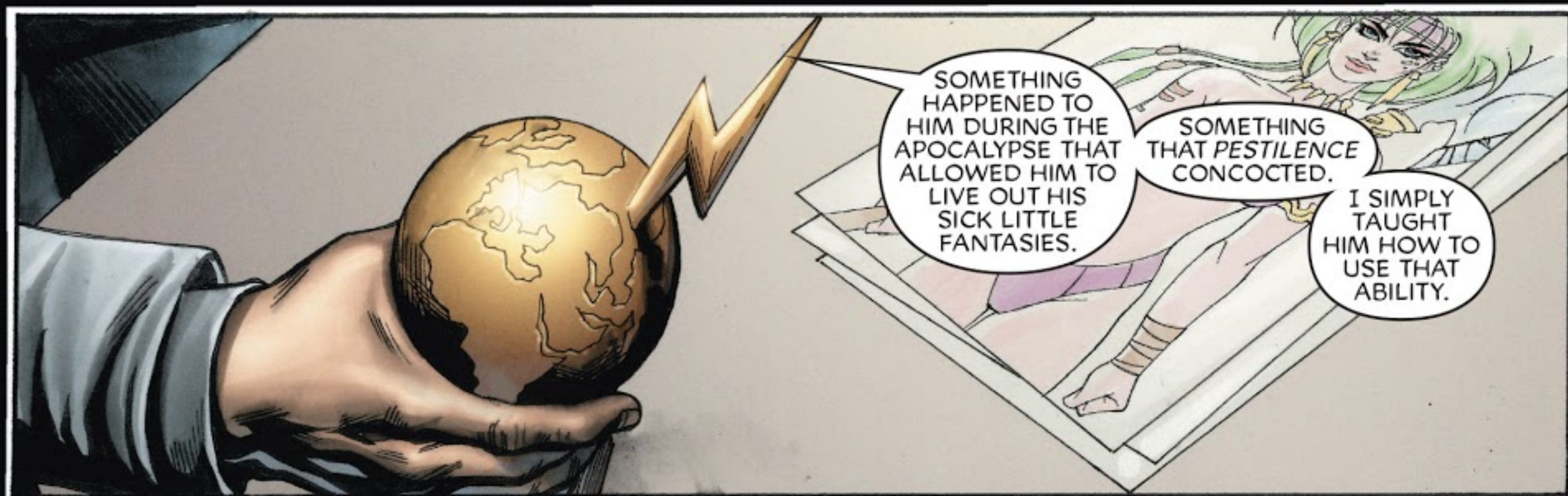


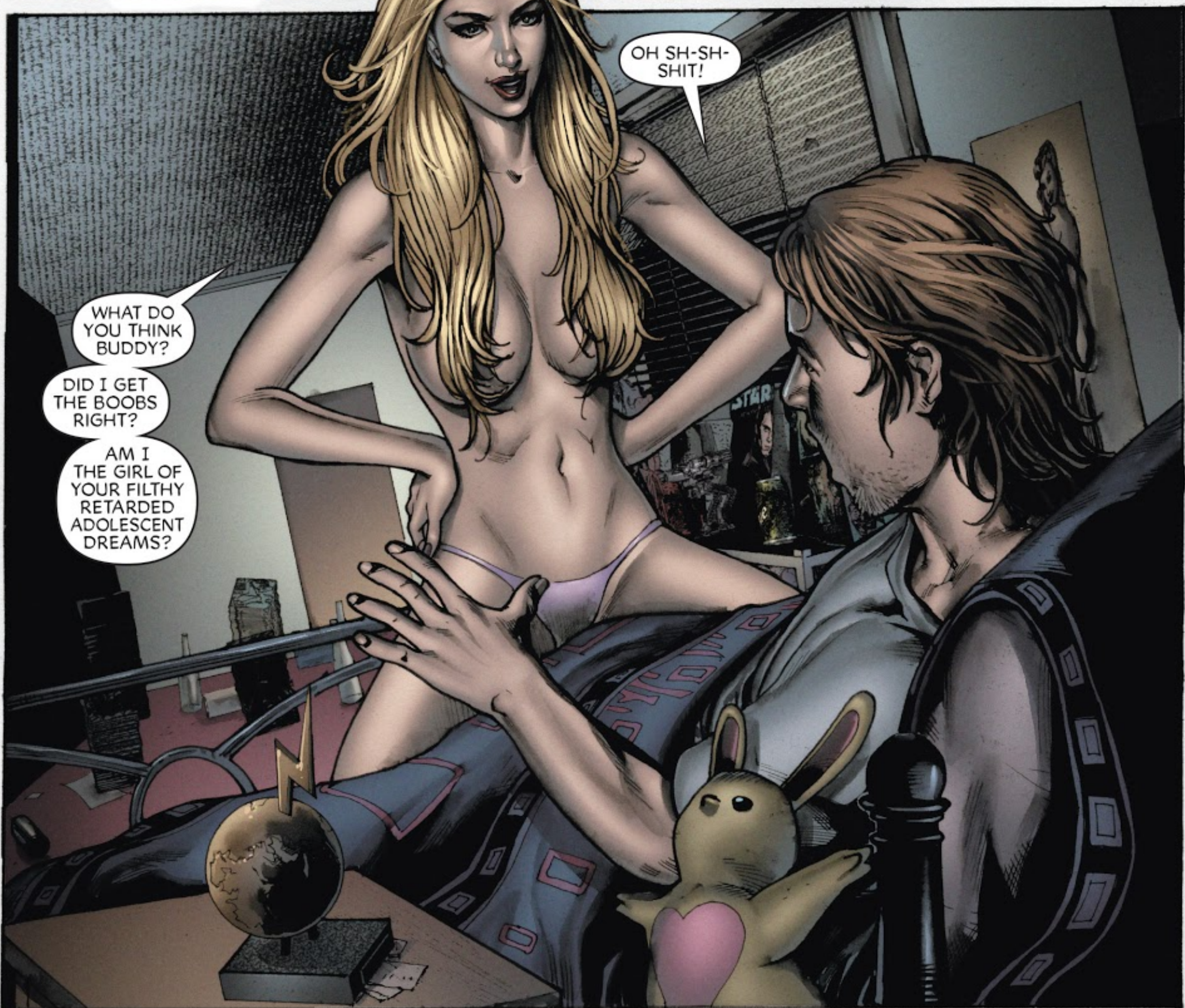
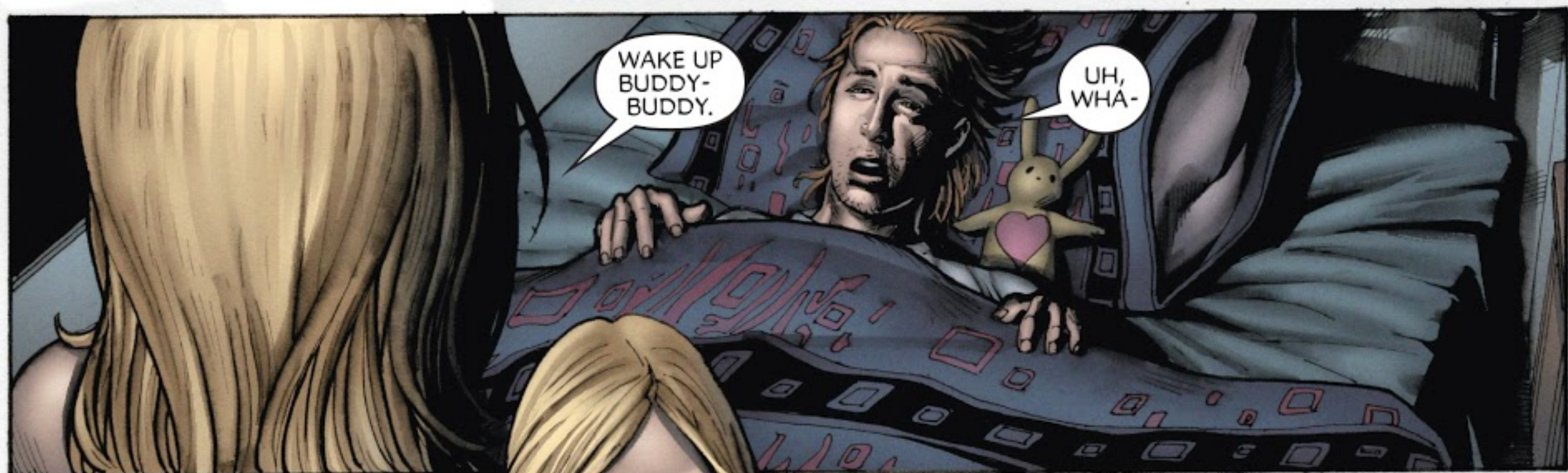


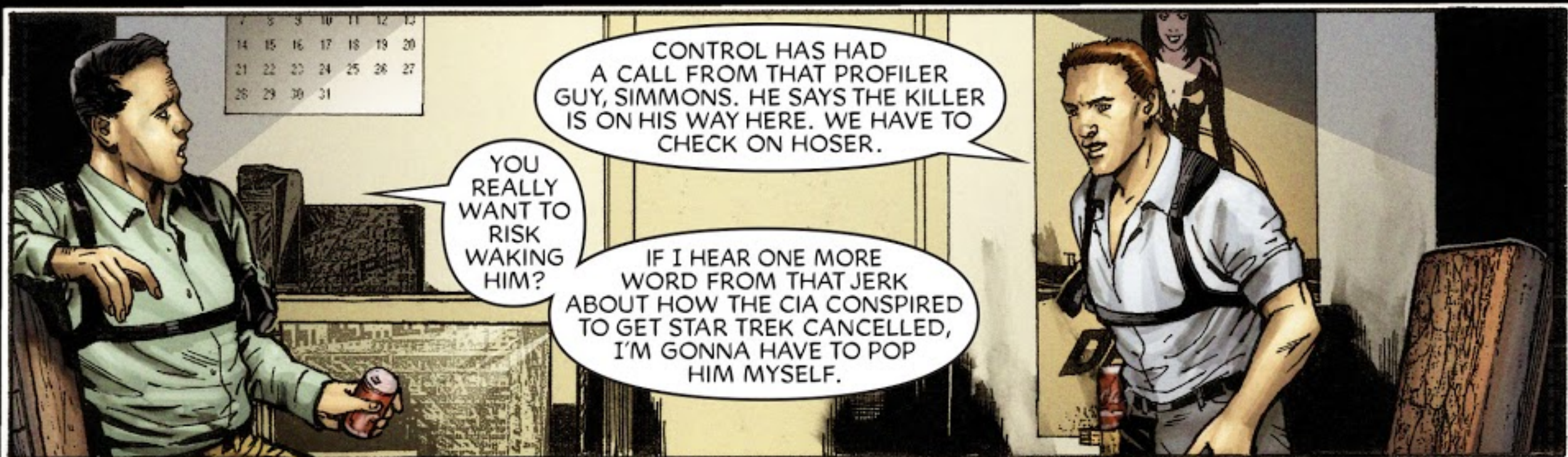


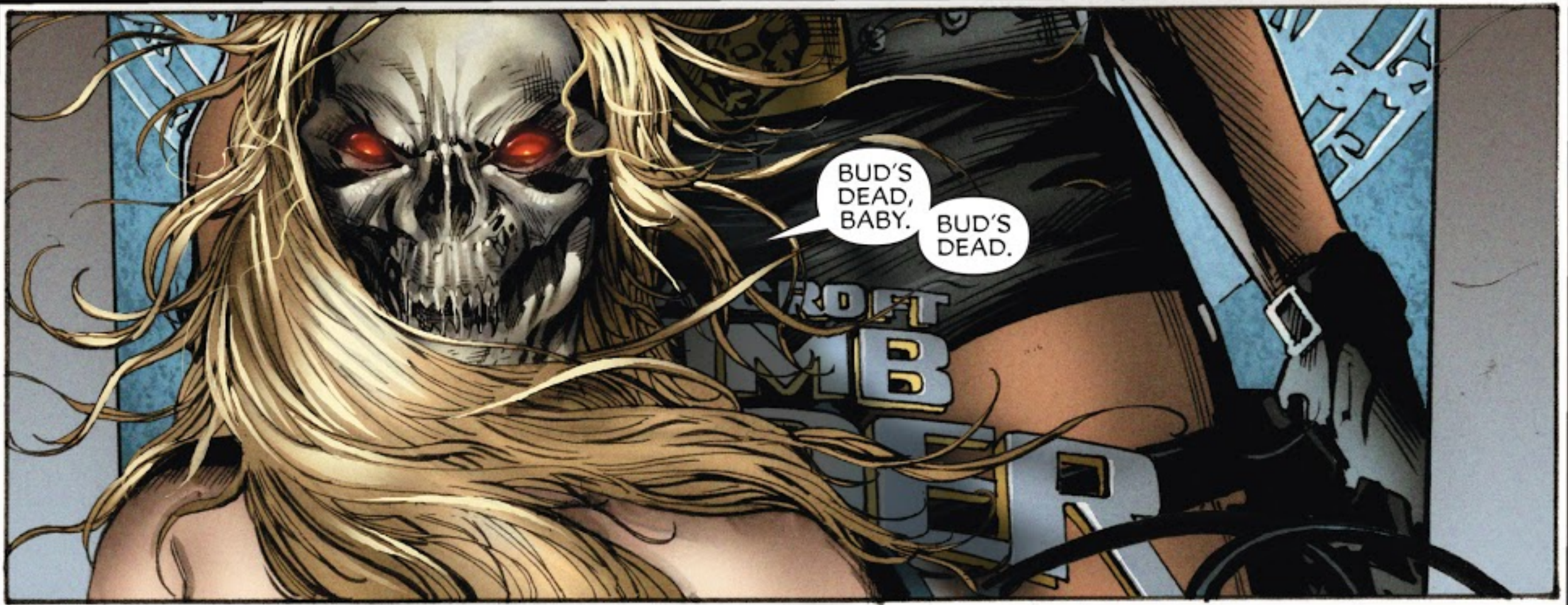














IF IT MAKES
YOU FEEL ANY
BETTER... JUDGING
FROM THE DAMP
PATCH UNDER MY
CROTCH...

...HE
DIED
HAPPY.



NO.
I'M GOING
IN.

HE GOT
PAST OUR
AGENTS.
HOSER'S
ALREADY
DEAD.

I'M
GOING
IN.

WHAT
HAPPENED TO
YOUR SENSE OF
JUSTICE? DOESN'T
KENNETH DESERVE
A FAIR TRIAL?

IF EITHER ONE
OF YOU COMES
THROUGH THAT BARRIER,
YOU'LL KILL KENNY. ANY
CONTACT WITH
BACTERIA-



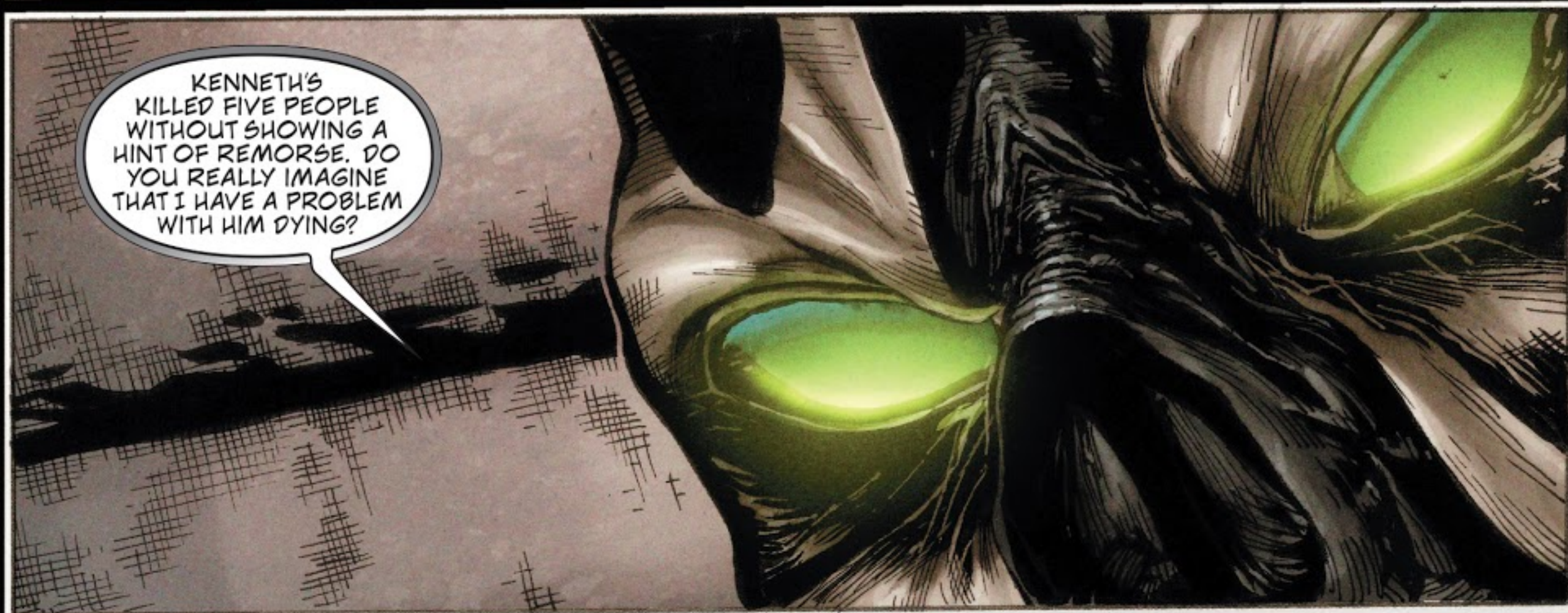
HE DOESN'T
SEEM TO HAVE ANY
PROBLEM BREATHING THE
SAME AIR AS YOU.



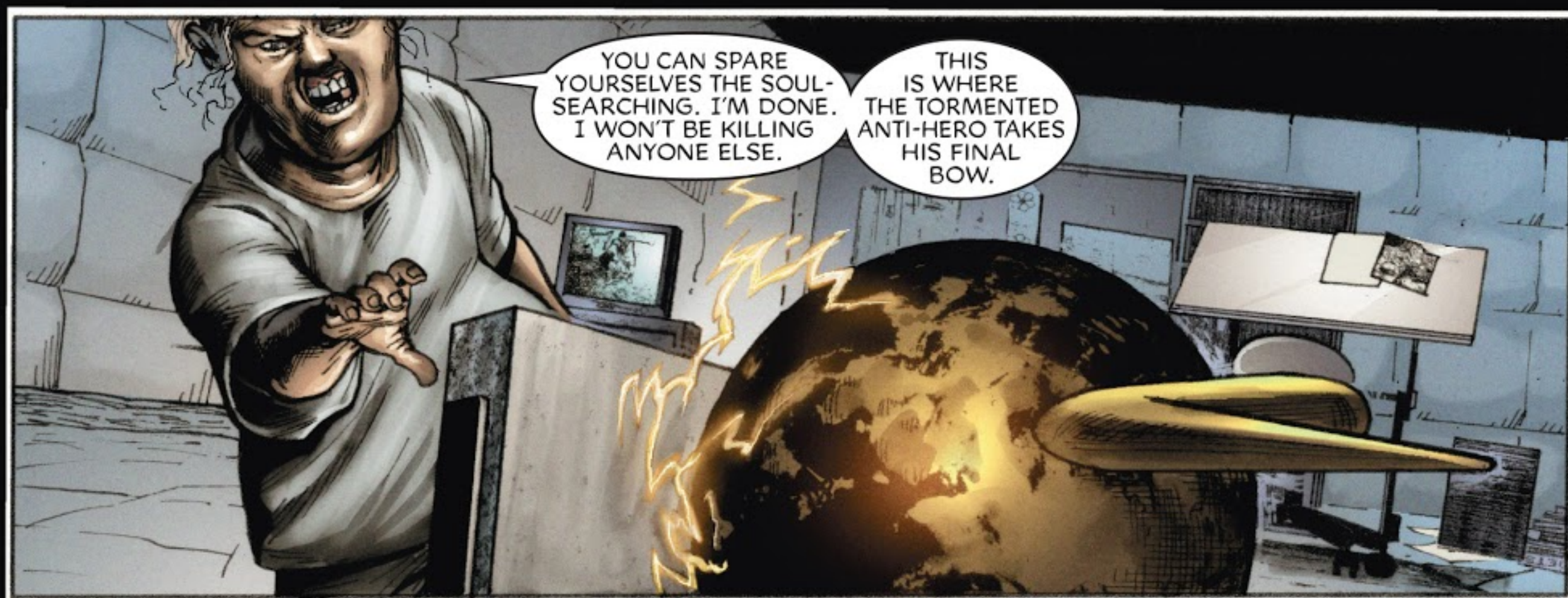
I'M AN
ANGEL.

A FALLEN ANGEL,
PERHAPS. BUT STILL AN
ANGEL. BACTERIOLOGICALLY
SPEAKING, I'M AS PURE AS
DRIVEN SNOW.

YOU ON
THE OTHER
HAND... I IMAGINE
YOUR BREATH
ALONE WOULD
KILL HIM AT FIFTY
PACES.



KENNETH'S
KILLED FIVE PEOPLE
WITHOUT SHOWING A
HINT OF REMORSE. DO
YOU REALLY IMAGINE
THAT I HAVE A PROBLEM
WITH HIM DYING?



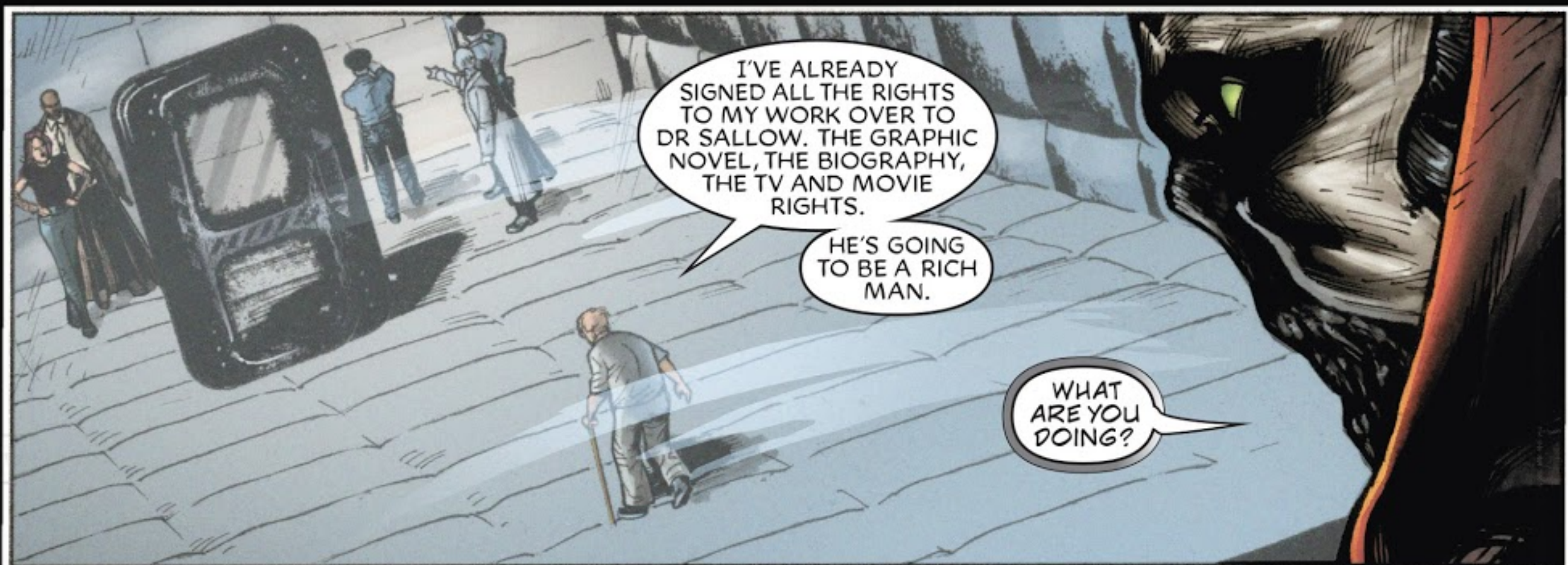
YOU CAN SPARE YOURSELVES THE SOUL-SEARCHING. I'M DONE. I WON'T BE KILLING ANYONE ELSE.

THIS IS WHERE THE TORMENTED ANTI-HERO TAKES HIS FINAL BOW.



I'VE EXPOSED THE MEDIOCRITY OF THOSE SECOND-RATE HACKS.

THE PUBLISHERS WILL BE FIGHTING OVER *MY* STORY NOW.



I'VE ALREADY SIGNED ALL THE RIGHTS TO MY WORK OVER TO DR SALLOW. THE GRAPHIC NOVEL, THE BIOGRAPHY, THE TV AND MOVIE RIGHTS.

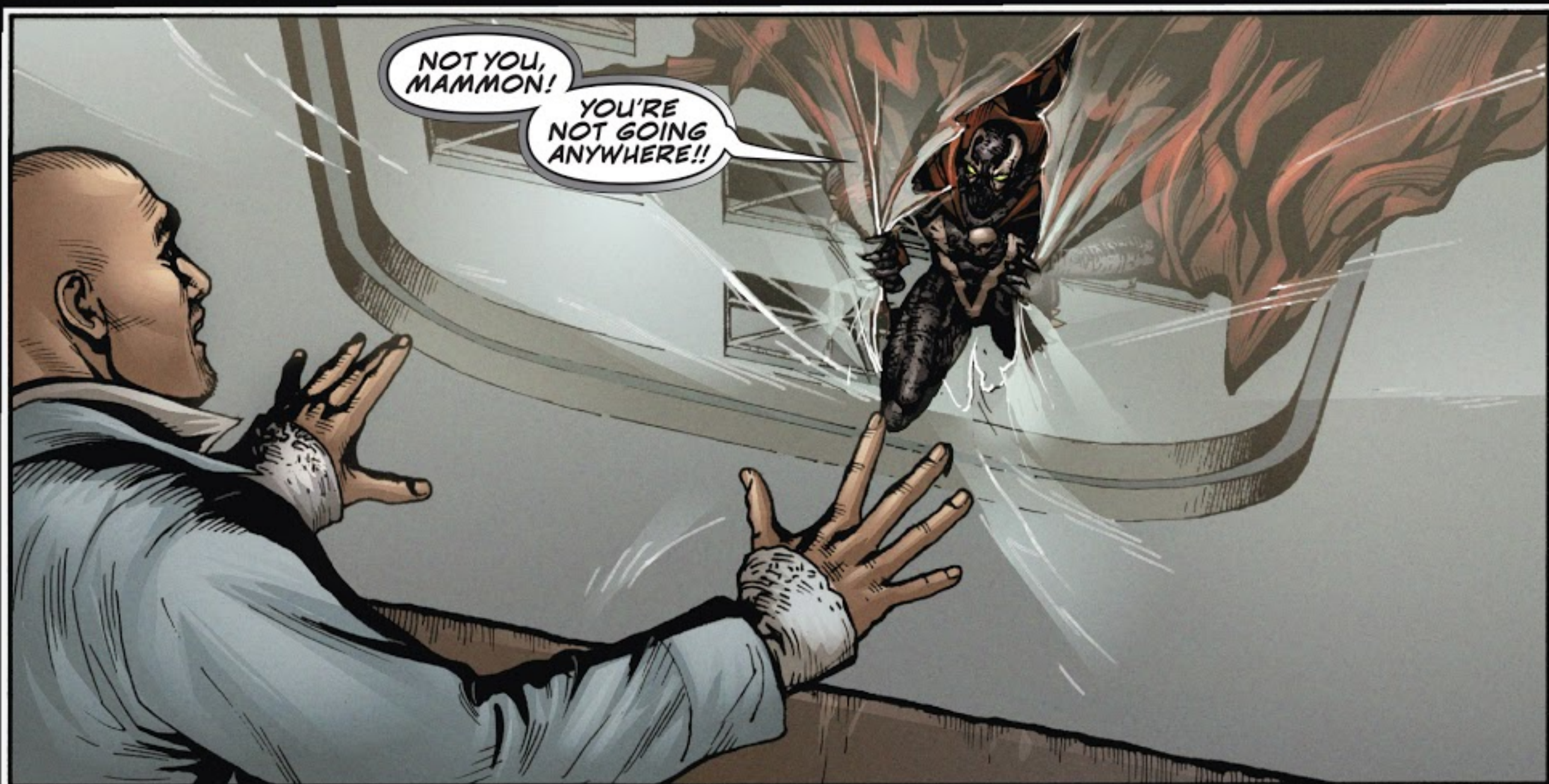
HE'S GOING TO BE A RICH MAN.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?



I'M COMING OUT. I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS BUBBLE.

IF I STAY IN HERE MUCH LONGER, I THINK IT'S JUST POSSIBLE I MAY GO CRAZY.





"IN A FEW MINUTES, KENNETH
WILL BE DEAD AND WHAT'S
LEFT OF THIS BODY WILL MELT
AWAY INTO THE ETHER.







SPAWN®

HINE

HABERLIN

NOORA

DEAD MAN WALKING



ISSUE 178 DIGITAL EDITION

SPAWN.COM

IS THIS IT?
IS THIS
DEATH?

EVERYTHING
FALLING AWAY.
EVERYTHING
I KNEW.
EVERYTHING
I AM.

IT ALL SLIPS
THROUGH MY
GRASP.

WHAT
AM I?

WHO
AM I?

ALL I KNOW
IS THAT I HAVE
LONGED FOR
THIS.

THIS
EMPTINESS.

THIS
PEACE.

I AM
FALLING...

...FALLING
TOWARDS
OBLIVION...

MAGGOTS!

THEY'RE THE
WORST, DUDE. THE
MAGGOTS.

I CAN'T COUNT
THE NUMBER OF TIMES I'VE
BEEN SHOWERED WITH THE
DAMN' THINGS WHEN I
UNZIP A BAG.

THAT VOICE,
WHY DOES IT FILL
ME WITH SUCH
DREAD?

WHAT IS
THIS
PLACE?

AM I IN
HELL??





SURE.
RIGHT. WELL,
THE WALKING
DEAD CAN
BITE MY-

OH, MY
GOD!



YAHH!!

NONONONONO...
HE WAS BLEED
OUT...H-H-HE WAS
COLD.

IT'S ALL RIGHT.
I'M...THERE'S BEEN
A MISTAKE.
I'M...I'M NOT...



MY
HANDS...







MACEDONIA.

I REMEMBER...

...AFTER THE
SICKNESS
TOOK ME.

ADELPHA.
MY LOVE.
MY BRIDE.



THE SWEETEST
BLOOD I EVER
TASTED.



I REMEMBER...

...THE SLAUGHTER
IN ROME. WE RAN
IN PACKS...

...THE STENCH OF BLOOD AND FIRE...
THE SCREAMS OF THE DYING...

I REMEMBER...

...LUCIAN AND
DACIANA, LEADERS
OF THE TRUE
VRYKOLAKAS,
WHO WITHDREW
FROM THE SIGHT
OF MEN.

ALL THE LONG CENTURIES, HIDING IN THE SHADOWS,
BIDING OUR TIME, WHILE OUR COUSINS, THE VAMPIR,
INFILTRATED THE NOBILITY OF EUROPE.

VLAD
TEPES, THE
IMPALER.

ELIZABETH BATHORY, THE
BLOOD COUNTESS, PARADING
THEIR LUSTS FOR ALL TO SEE.

WE WATCHED WITH CONTEMPT AS
SIMON PURE LED HIS BLOOD-SUCKING
HORDES IN SERVICE TO HEAVEN.

ALL THE WHILE
WE CONCEALED
OURSELVES, GIVING
OUR ALLEGIANCE TO
NO ONE. AND WE
SURVIVED.



I REMEMBER...

... MAMMON. THE WIZARD.
THE FALLEN ANGEL.
THE FORGOTTEN ONE.

HE PROMISED US
APOCALYPSE AND
A NEW AGE.



HE BROUGHT US A MESSIAH
WHO WOULD LEAD US TO
CONQUER THIS NEW WORLD.
A CREATURE WHO WAS NOT
VRYKOLAKAS OR VAMPIR OR
ANYTHING KNOWN TO
THIS WORLD.



DACIANA AND LUCIAN
RAISED IT AS THEIR
OWN. A CREATURE
OF MONTRIOUS
APPETITES. IT
GORGED ITSELF ON
BLOOD AND PAIN.
THEY NAMED IT AFTER
THE THING I YEARN
FOR. THEY NAMED IT
AFTER DEATH ITSELF.

I REMEMBER...



...MORANA.

YES
SEVERIN.
MORANA.

I DON'T
WANT ANY PART
OF MAMMON'S
DREAMS OF
DOMINION OVER
THE EARTH.



I'M *SICK* OF IT. SICK
OF THE KILLING. I WANT AN
END TO THIS LIFE.

BUT YOU CAN'T DIE
CAN YOU? STARVING YOUR-
SELF OF BLOOD. EXPOSING
YOURSELF TO THE RAYS OF
THE MIDDAY SUN.

THAT PATHETIC
ATTEMPT AT
DECAPITATION.

I SAW
YOU SEVERIN. I
WATCHED YOU BUILD
YOUR GUILLOTINE. I
HEARD YOU MUTTERING
YOUR WRETCHED
PRAYERS.

WHO DID
YOU PRAY TO?
JEHOVAH? SATAN?
THE ANCIENT
GODS OF YOUR
YOUTH?

AND
YET, YOU
STILL
LIVE.





WHY HAVE YOU
COME HERE? WHY DO
YOU FOLLOW ME?

MAMMON
HAS A TASK
FOR YOU.

I TOLD YOU.
I WANT NONE
OF IT.

IT'S A SIMPLE
TASK. IF YOU PERFORM
IT WELL, MAMMON HAS
PROMISED THAT THIS WILL
BE YOUR LAST DAY
ON EARTH.

HOW? IF NONE
OF THE OLD WAYS WORK,
HOW CAN I DIE?



SORCERY.
THE OLD WAYS ARE
ENDED. MAMMON IS
THE POWER NOW.

DO THIS ONE
THING AND HE WILL
GRANT YOUR WISH.
YOU WILL NEVER
SEE ANOTHER
SUNRISE.

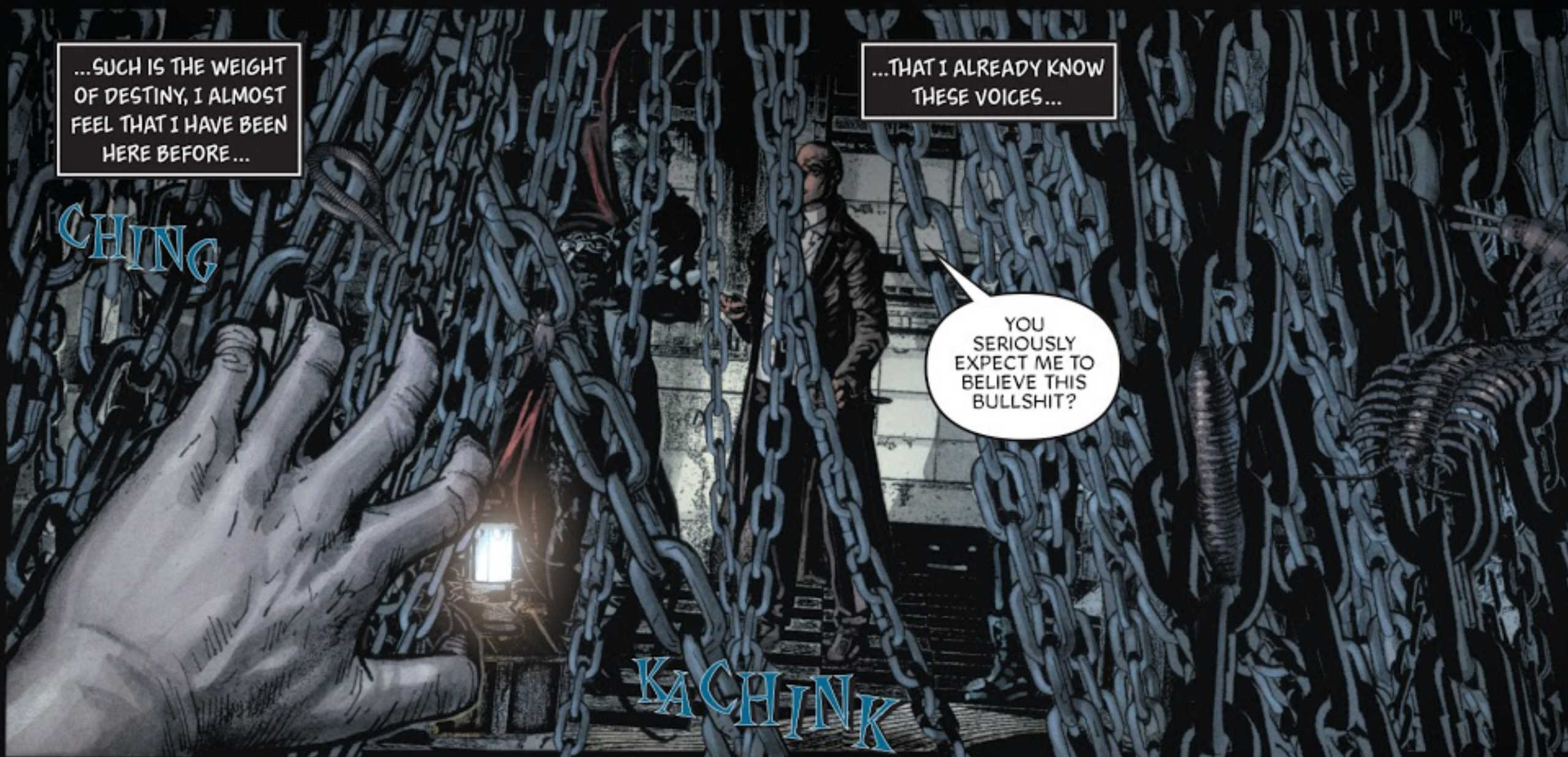
WHAT
WOULD HE
HAVE ME
DO?



YOU HAVE
TO BITE A
HELLSPAWN.











DID HE? DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT?

YOU LIVED THROUGH THE APOCALYPSE. YOU SAW. EVERYBODY DIED AND AL BROUGHT US ALL BACK.

HOW ABOUT THAT! MY BROTHER IS GOD.

HALLELUJAH!



THING IS BRO, MALEFICK NEVER CAME ACROSS TO ME AS A GOOD GUY Y'KNOW? THE WELFARE OF HUMANITY NEVER SEEMED TO BE TOP OF HIS AGENDA.

HE WAS CLEARING THE STAGE. WHATEVER HE'S BEEN PLOTTING ALL THESE YEARS... THESE CENTURIES...IT'S ONLY JUST STARTING.

SO WHAT'S NEXT?



THAT WOULD BE ME.





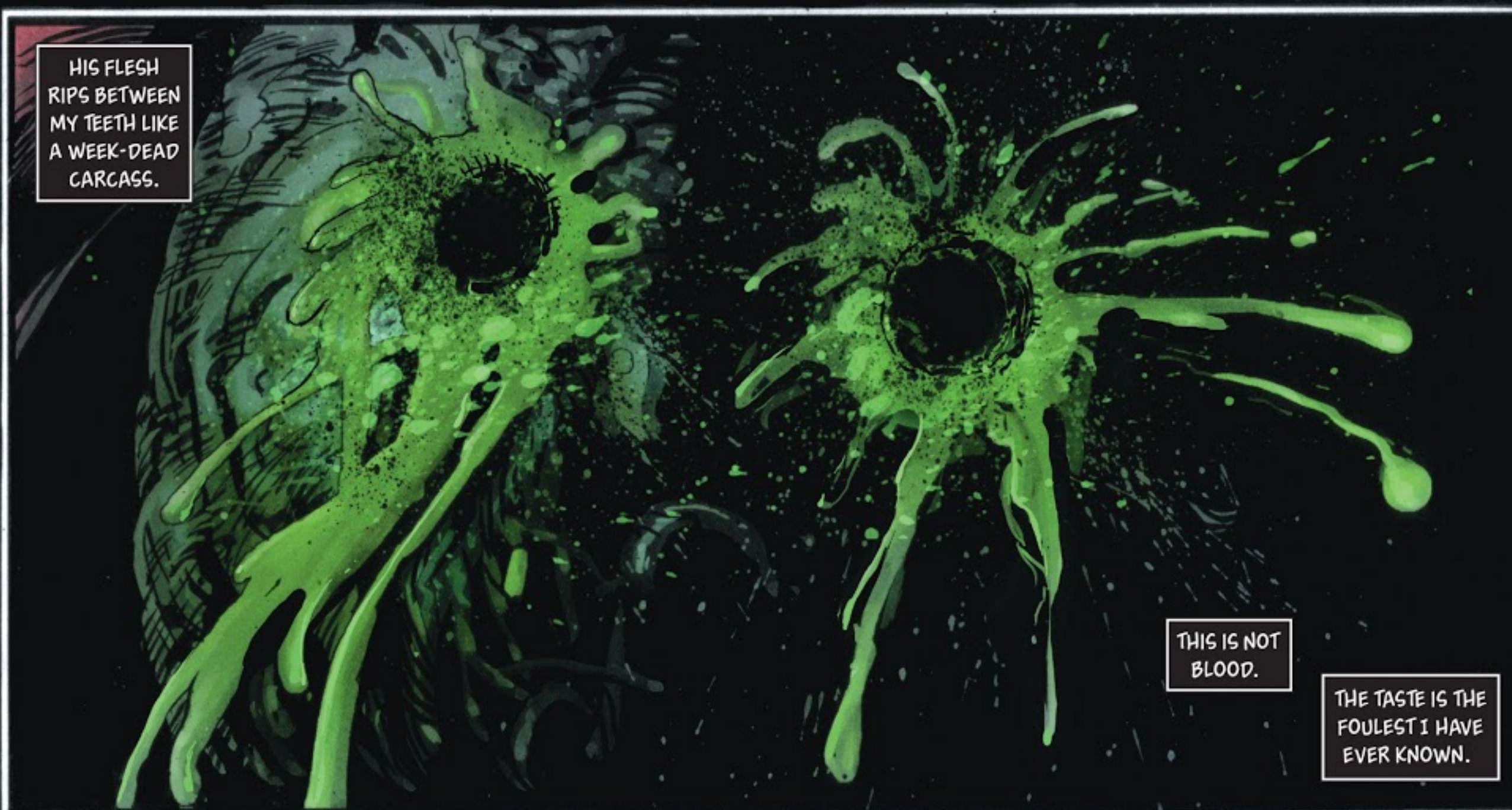
YOU'LL NEED
MORE THAN FAIRY
LIGHTS TO PROTECT
YOURSELF FROM
ME, MY DEAR.

AAAK



NO!
YOU DON'T
TOUCH
HER, YOU
FILTH!

SUCH ANGER. THE
WOMAN MUST MEAN
A LOT TO HIM.

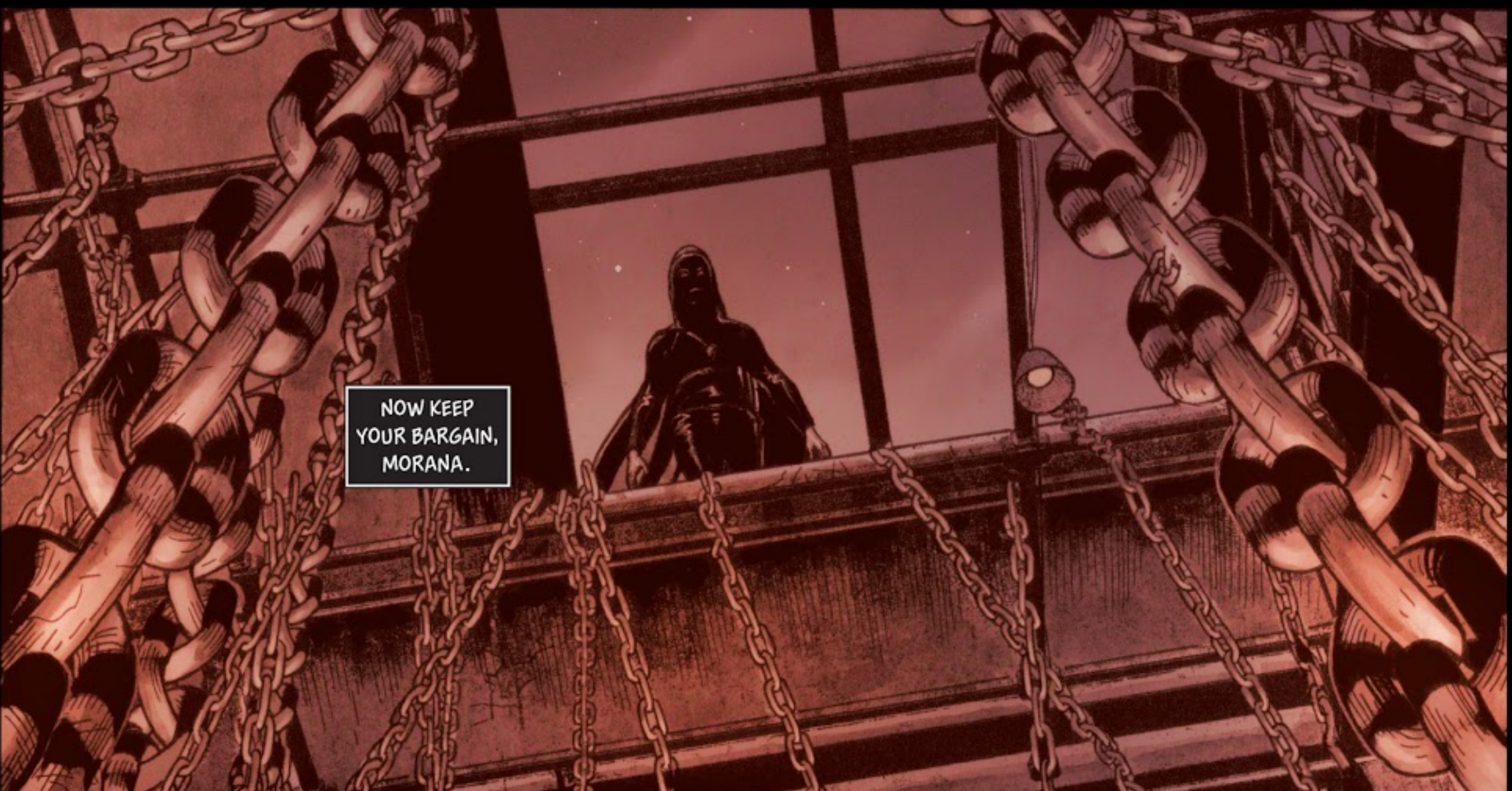


HIS FLESH
RIPS BETWEEN
MY TEETH LIKE
A WEEK-DEAD
CARCASS.

THIS IS NOT
BLOOD.

THE TASTE IS THE
FOULEST I HAVE
EVER KNOWN.









CONGRATULATIONS,
SEVERIN.

THAT
WASN'T SO
HARD WAS
IT??

WHAT HAVE
I DONE TO HIM?
WHY DO YOU TAKE
SUCH PLEASURE IN
HIS PAIN?



I HAVE
MY REASONS,
BUT THAT ISN'T YOUR
CONCERN. YOU'RE
DONE WITH THIS
LIFE.

HERE'S
YOUR
REWARD.

MAMMON'S
GIFT TO YOU.



WILL
THIS KILL
ME?

AS I
PROMISED...
YOU WILL NEVER
SEE ANOTHER
SUNRISE.



AREN'T YOU
CURIOUS WHAT
WILL HAPPEN? NO
QUALMS ABOUT WHAT
THE AFTERLIFE HAS IN
STORE FOR YOU?

HEAVEN
WILL NOT HAVE
ME. I'M CERTAIN
OF THAT.



AND NOTHING
THAT HELL HAS
TO OFFER CAN BE
WORSE THAN
THIS LIFE.

I DON'T
FEAR IT.



AS I UNDERSTAND
IT, HELL IS *PRECISELY* THE
THING YOU FEAR THE MOST.
WHATEVER IS WAITING
FOR YOU, IT'S THE HELL
YOU CREATED.

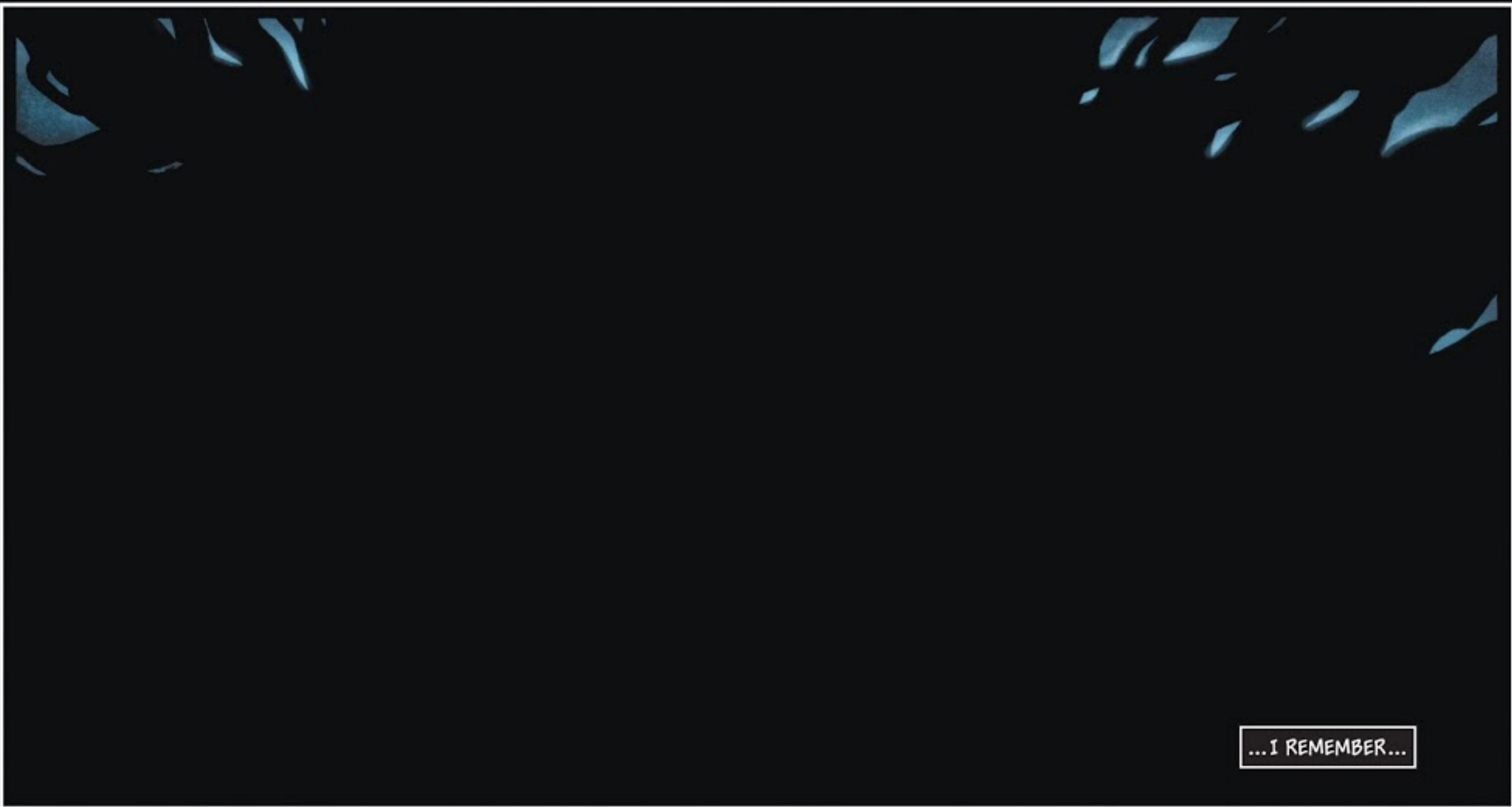


GOODBYE
SEVERIN.

I REMEMBER NOW...



... OH GOD HELP ME...



... I REMEMBER...

IS THIS IT?
IS THIS
DEATH?

EVERYTHING
FALLING AWAY.
EVERYTHING
I KNEW.
EVERYTHING
I AM.

IT ALL SLIPS
THROUGH MY
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WHAT IS
THIS
PLACE?

AM I IN
HELL??



THE END.
NEVER...



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HINE

MAYHEW

TROY



Mayhew

WAR SPAWN



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TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK-TAK



TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK



TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK-A

TAK-A-
TAK-A-

TAK-
A-TAK



BRUD-D-A-B-R-U-D-D-A-B-R-U-D-D-A-

TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK-A-TAK


WAR IS HELL.




WHEN THE FIRST MAN
TOOK UP A CLUB TO
BATTLE FOR THE ROTTED
CARCASS THAT WOULD
KEEP HIS BELLY FULL
FOR ONE MORE NIGHT,
HE KNEW IT.



EVERY SOLDIER WHO FOUGHT
THROUGH MUD, BLOOD AND
HIS OWN SPILLED GUTS,
WITH SWORD AND SLINGSHOT,
MUSKET AND BAYONET,
MACHINE-GUN, TANK AND
MISSILE, AT ACTIUM,
HASTINGS, AGINCOURT,
CULLODEN, TRAFALGAR,
GETTYSBURG, STALINGRAD...




...THE PEOPLE OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI, FLEEING FROM THEIR BURNING CITIES, THE RAW FLESH PEELING AND DROPPING FROM THEIR BONES...



...THE TERRIFIED CHILDREN OF BAGHDAD, HUDDLED IN THE BASEMENTS OF THEIR HOMES AS THE EARTH SHOOK WITH THE POUNDING OF ANOTHER NIGHT'S BOMBARDMENT...

...THEY ALL KNEW THAT WAR IS HELL.



EVERY MOTHER, FATHER, LOVING WIFE, WHO HAS WAITED FOR THE TELEGRAM, THE LETTER, THE KNOCK ON THE DOOR TO ANNOUNCE THAT ONE MORE BRAVE SOLDIER HAS FALLEN...

...THEY DON'T NEED TO BE TOLD THAT WAR IS HELL...

FOR THOSE FALLEN SOLDIERS, AT LEAST THE WAR IS OVER. DEATH BRINGS AN END...

...BUT FOR THIS WARRIOR, THERE IS NO DEATH. NO END. NO RELIEF.

FOR HIM, WAR TRULY IS AN EVERLASTING HELL.



AT HIS COMMAND, THEY RISE ONCE MORE FROM THEIR FOXHOLES, SHAMBLING FORWARDS ACROSS THIS MISBEGOTTEN NO MAN'S LAND.

How MANY TIMES?

How LONG?

TIME HERE IS NOT MEASURED IN DAYS OR YEARS.

BACK AND FORTH THEY GO, BATTLING OVER AND OVER FOR THE SAME PATCH OF TORN, BLEEDING EARTH, IN THIS ENDLESS DRESS-REHEARSAL FOR ARMAGEDDON.



SOMETIMES HE FORGETS THAT THERE WAS ANOTHER PLACE, WHERE THE SUN ROSE AND SET, WHERE BATTLES BEGAN AND ENDED, WHERE THE DEAD WERE BURIED AND THE SURVIVORS PRAYED AND CLUNG TO THE HOPE THAT THEY WOULD RETURN TO THE ONES THEY LOVED.



FRANCE, JULY 1st 1916. THE FIRST DAY OF THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME. THIS WILL BECOME KNOWN AS THE FIRST WORLD WAR, BUT BEFORE THAT IT WILL BE CALLED THE GREAT WAR - THE WAR TO END ALL WARS. BECAUSE AFTER THIS, WHO WOULD DREAM THAT MEN COULD EVER GO TO WAR AGAIN?



IN THE NEXT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, 20,000 BRITISH TROOPS WILL DIE. 40,000 WILL BE INJURED. 60,000 CASUALTIES IN THIS SINGLE BLOODIEST DAY IN MILITARY HISTORY.



THESE MEN DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WAITING FOR THEM. THEY JOINED UP FOR ACTION AND EXCITEMENT. THEY ANSWERED THE CALL FOR KING AND COUNTRY. TO SHOW THE HUN WHAT ENGLISHMEN ARE MADE OF.



WE'LL SEE. OH YES, WE'LL SEE WHAT ENGLISHMEN ARE MADE OF.

CAPTAIN THOMAS CORAM KNOWS THAT HIS MEN ARE UNDER-TRAINED AND THAT THEY WILL BE FIGHTING BATTLE-HARDENED VETERANS WHO HAVE HAD MONTHS TO DIG IN AND ESTABLISH THEIR DEFENSES.




HE KNOWS THAT MANY OF HIS MEN WILL DIE TODAY. HE HAS LONG DENIED THE EXISTENCE OF GOD, BUT STILL, JUST THIS ONCE, HE PRAYS FOR THEM...

... AND FOR ONE IN PARTICULAR.



AS THE BOMBARDMENT RIPS THE FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE APART, THE SOUND OF SHELLING FADES AND HE REMEMBERS OTHER FAR-OFF FIELDS...





IT IS 1896 AND THOMAS CORAM'S FAMILY HAS RECENTLY RETURNED FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. THOMAS THINKS OF HIMSELF AS AN ENLIGHTENED MAN. HE BELIEVES, WITH PAINE AND JEFFERSON, THAT ALL MEN ARE BORN EQUAL.

"Do you love me, Thomas?"
"I do, I do, I do."
"Say it then."
"I love you, Selma."
"Even though you are a man with expectations? And I am—"

SHE FALLS SILENT. HER EYES DROP.

"What, Selma? Beautiful? Yes. Intelligent, vivacious, adorable? Yes, yes and yes."
"I'm your father's servant, Thomas. His colored servant."
"Love conquers all things, Selma."
"Does it? Then walk home with me. You don't have to hold my hand. Just walk with me. Will you do that?"

AH. NO ANSWER. SHE SIGHS AS SHE TAKES UP HER BONNET AND TURNS HER HEAD AWAY WHEN HE TRIES TO MAKE IT RIGHT WITH ANOTHER KISS.

THE WORLD IS CHANGING BUT NOT THAT FAST. THERE IS CLASS AND THERE IS RACE AND THERE IS BREEDING. HE WILL HAVE HIS WAY WITH HER IN HIS FATHER'S FIELDS, BUT HE WILL NOT WALK AT HER SIDE. NOT IN THIS CENTURY.

A FEW DAYS LATER, HIS FATHER ALLOWS THOMAS TO JOIN THE MEN FOR CIGARS. A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR YOUNG THOMAS, TO SIT WITH THESE MIDDLE-AGED PATRIARCHS AS THEY DISCUSS THE WAYS OF THE WORLD.

"The twentieth century will bring a new age of peace and equality, mark my words."
"You have brought some strange ideas back with you from our former colonies, Richard."
"And an interesting maid servant."
"Selma?"
"Her skin is light for an African."

THOMAS FEELS THE HEAT RISE TO HIS CHEEKS AT THE MENTION OF SELMA.

"Do you know why American negroes are light-skinned? It seems their slave owners bred with them. To improve the stock."
"Terrible. Terrible thing."
"Slavery was an abomination."
"Yes, yes. Quite agree. Rights of man and all that. But the thing that we must never forget is, that no matter how much white blood they have in them, a negro is still a negro, Richard. And negroes will never amount to much."
"You are wrong, Charles. The coloreds will find their place in society and they must be treated kindly and humanely."


HIS FATHER'S LIBERALISM IS AS WEAK AS HIS MOTHER'S TEA. THOMAS BREAKS HIS SILENCE AT LAST, DRAWLING WITH UNACCUSTOMED SARCASM.

"Like horses perhaps? Or dogs?"

HE LEAVES THE ROOM BEFORE HIS FATHER CAN ORDER HIM OUT, FEELING THE STERN EYES UPON HIS NECK.

SELMA WOULD BE PROUD OF HIM.





HE SEES THE CHILD ONLY ONCE. SHE STANDS OUTSIDE IN THE RAIN UNTIL HE GOES OUT TO HER AND THE BABY SHE CRADLES IN HER ARMS. A BEAUTIFUL BOY.

IT TEARS HIM APART...

"His name is Michael."

...THE WAY SHE LOOKS AT HIM...

"I'll look after you, Selma. I promise."

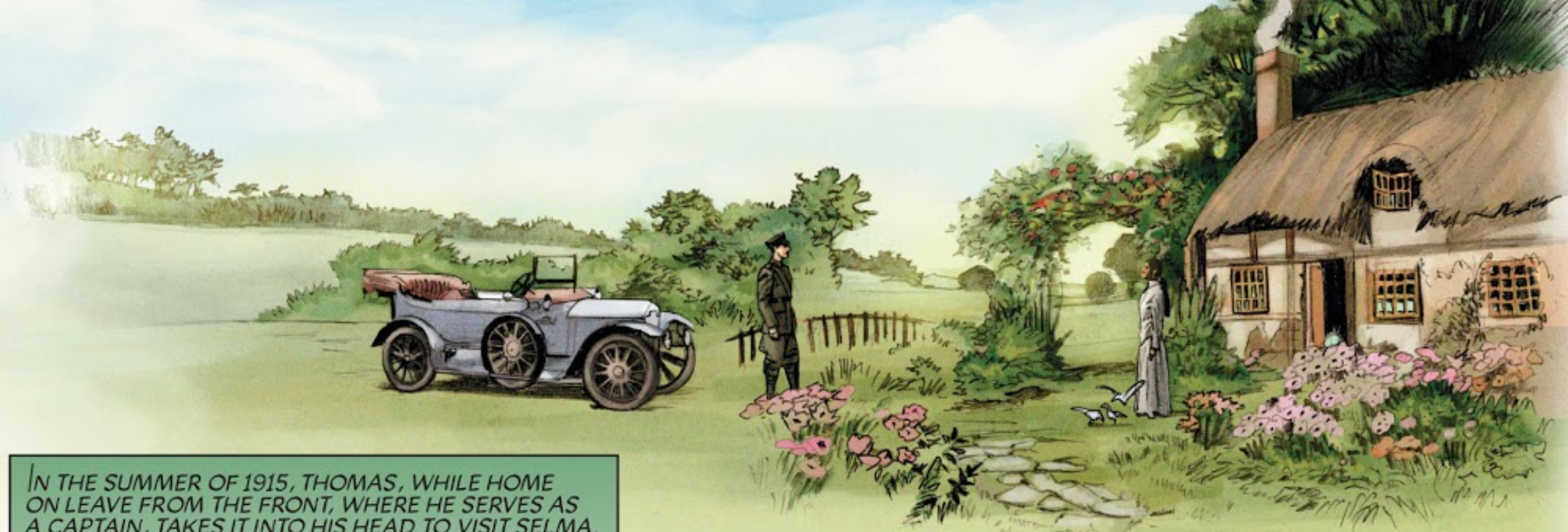
...THE BITTERNESS IN HER VOICE...

"Are you proposing to me?"

SHE LOOKS SO PROUD AND ALL HE CAN FEEL IS SHAME.

HE KEEPS HIS WORD. HE NEVER FORGETS THEM. EVERY MONTH HE SENDS HER MONEY, EVEN AFTER HE MARRIES AND HAS OTHER CHILDREN, WITH FAIR HAIR AND PINK CHEEKS.

IT WILL BE EIGHTEEN YEARS BEFORE HE SEES HIS SON AGAIN.



IN THE SUMMER OF 1915, THOMAS, WHILE HOME ON LEAVE FROM THE FRONT, WHERE HE SERVES AS A CAPTAIN, TAKES IT INTO HIS HEAD TO VISIT SELMA. PERHAPS IT IS THE WAR, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF IMMINENT DEATH. PERHAPS HE FEELS THERE ARE THINGS TO BE SETTLED BETWEEN THEM. HE PUTS ON HIS BEST UNIFORM, KISSES HIS WIFE ON THE CHEEK, AND DRIVES THE SEVENTY MILES TO SELMA'S COTTAGE.

AND THERE SHE STANDS, MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN EVER, AND HE FALLS IN LOVE WITH HER ALL OVER AGAIN.

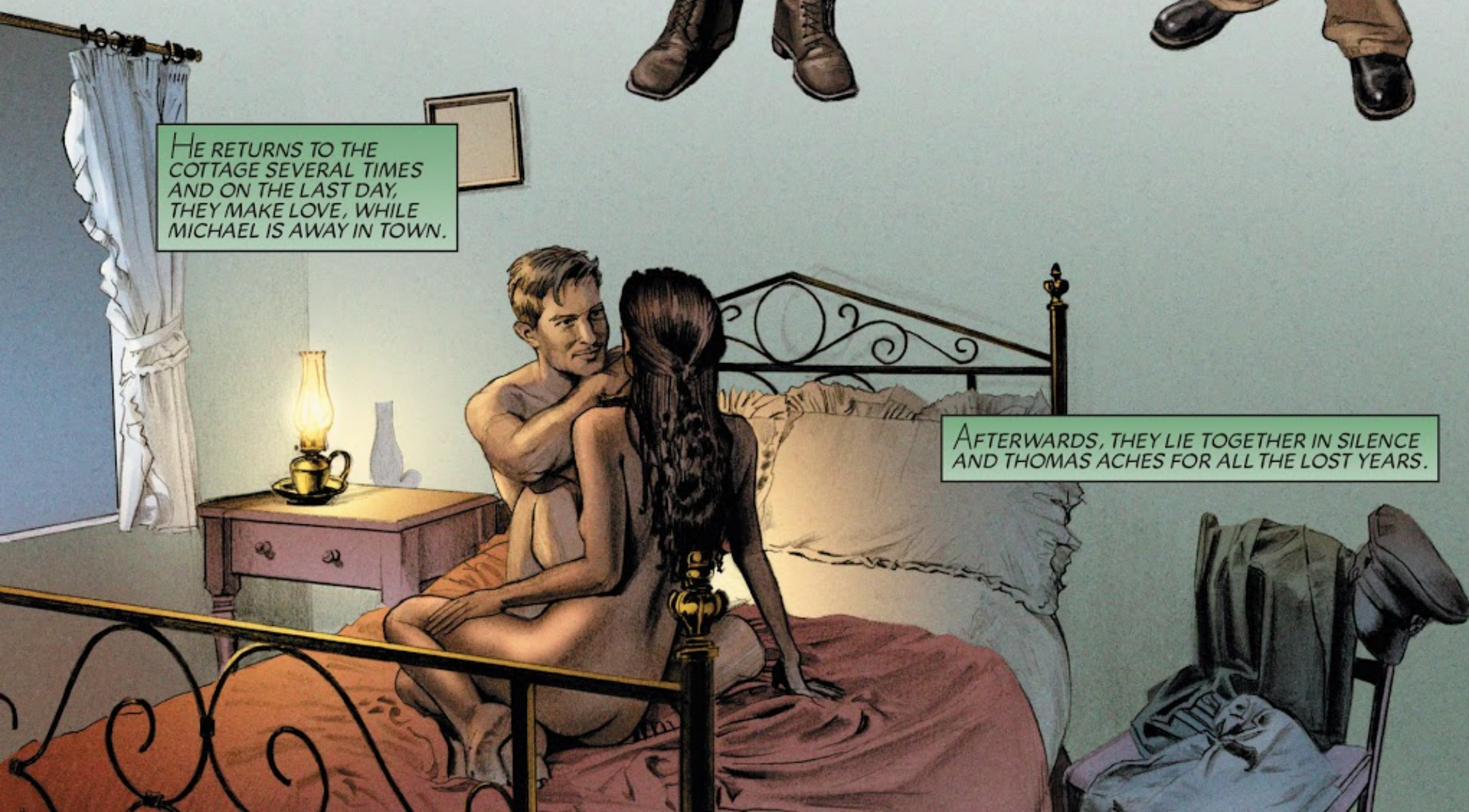
MICHAEL, AT EIGHTEEN, IS A HANDSOME BOY, INTELLIGENT AND SHARP AS A KNIFE. BUT THERE IS A SHADOW HANGING OVER HIM. A SULLENNESS IN HIS EYES, WHEN HE LOOKS AT THOMAS.

SELMA HAS TOLD MICHAEL THAT HIS FATHER IS DEAD. THOMAS LONGS TO TELL HIM THE TRUTH, TO PUT HIS ARMS AROUND THE BOY AND ASK HIS FORGIVENESS. INSTEAD THEY SHAKE HANDS FORMALLY. HE IS A FAMILY FRIEND, NOTHING MORE.



HE RETURNS TO THE COTTAGE SEVERAL TIMES AND ON THE LAST DAY, THEY MAKE LOVE, WHILE MICHAEL IS AWAY IN TOWN.

AFTERWARDS, THEY LIE TOGETHER IN SILENCE AND THOMAS ACHES FOR ALL THE LOST YEARS.



BRITONS

WHEN MICHAEL RETURNS, HE IS BURSTING WITH THE NEWS THAT HE HAS ANSWERED LORD KITCHENER'S CALL, SIGNED UP TO FIGHT FOR ENGLAND AND THE EMPIRE.

SELMA WEEPS WHEN SHE HEARS IT, BUT THOMAS REASSURES HER. THE WAR OFFICE WILL NOT SEND COLORED TROOPS TO FIGHT. THEY ARE TO BE USED FOR AMMUNITION CARRIERS AND GENERAL LABOR. NO BLACK BRITISH SOLDIER WILL BE ALLOWED TO SEE ACTION ON THE WESTERN FRONT.

MICHAEL LAUGHS AT THAT.

"I didn't sign up as colored. My skin's light enough to pass as white. I have a good English name and I speak the King's English with a Devonshire accent. No one will challenge me."

HE LEANS FORWARD, MEETING THOMAS'S EYES WITH A STEADY GAZE.

"You'll keep my secret won't you Captain? You won't betray me?"

THE LAST TIME HE SEES SELMA, THOMAS PROMISES HER. HE SWEARS ON HIS LIFE TO TAKE CARE OF HER SON.

HER REPLY IS COLD AS ICE:

"If anything happens to Michael..."

...don't come back..."

"WANTS
YOU
JOIN YOUR COUNTRY'S ARMY!
GOD SAVE THE KING





"...don't ever come back."

THE BRITISH GUNS HAVE CEASED FIRING. SMOKE BOMBS HAVE BEEN SENT INTO NO MAN'S LAND TO LAY DOWN COVER FOR THE ATTACK, LENDING THE SCENE A DREAMLIKE QUALITY.



THOMAS HAS USED HIS INFLUENCE TO KEEP MICHAEL CLOSE, CLAIMING MICHAEL AS THE SON OF A FAMILY FRIEND. THE ARMY'S POLICY OF ALLOWING ACQUAINTANCES TO SERVE TOGETHER IN THE 'PALS' BATTALIONS, MEANS WHOLE COMMUNITIES WILL SEE THEIR YOUNG MEN WIPED OUT AT A STROKE.



GOOD LUCK, MICHAEL.



7:30. ZERO HOUR. THE WHISTLES SOUND ALONG THE RAGGED LINE OF TRENCHES AND OVER THEY GO. NO HESITATION. POOR BRAVE MAGNIFICENT BLOODY FOOLS.



THE ENEMY LINES HAVE BEEN POUNDED
RELENTLESSLY BY THE BRITISH ARTILLERY.
THE HOPE IS THAT THEIR GUNS HAVE
BEEN PUT OUT OF COMMISSION AND
THAT THE DEMORALISED GERMANS
WILL BE QUICKLY OVER-RUN.



FOR A FEW MOMENTS THERE IS AN EERIE SILENCE
AS THEY PASS INTO THE VEIL OF SMOKE.



THEN ALL HELL LETS LOOSE.



MICHAEL!





MICHAEL!



MICHAEL,
LISTEN TO
ME...

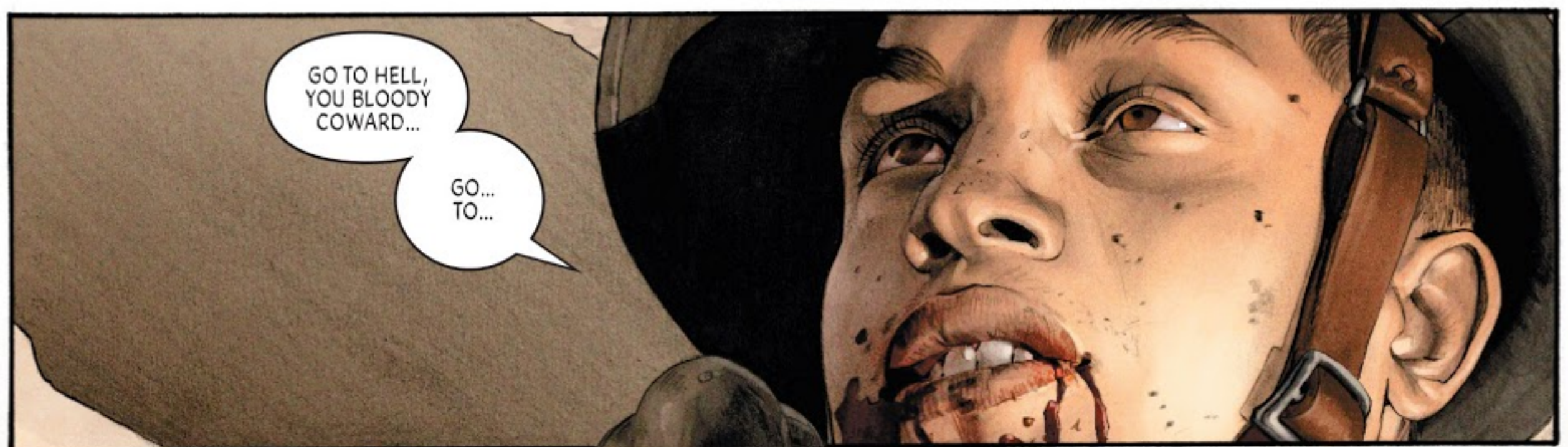
DON'T... WORRY...
CAPTAIN... I... KNOW
WHO YOU ARE... I KNEW...
THE FIRST TIME I... I
SAW YOU...



YOU RAN
AWAY FROM US. ALL
THOSE YEARS.

MY GOD...
WERE YOU
SO... SO
ASHAMED OF
ME?

I'M SO
SORRY
MICHAEL.



GO TO HELL,
YOU BLOODY
COWARD...

GO...
TO...



STAY
WITH ME,
MICHAEL.

STAY
WITH
ME...

IT'S TOO
LATE. HE CAN'T
HEAR YOU.



DON'T SHOOT, OLD CHAP. I'M NOT YOUR ENEMY.

WHAT UNIFORM IS THAT?

LET'S SAY I'M NEUTRAL, SHALL WE?

MORE OR LESS.



BLAM!



WHO ARE YOU?

NAMES'S MAMMON. LORD MAMMON ACTUALLY.

YOUR SON'S NOT DEAD, BY THE WAY. STILL A SPARK OF LIFE IN HIM.

YOU COULD SAVE HIM.



SELMA WOULD WANT THAT WOULDN'T SHE?

WHAT? HOW DO YOU KNOW-?

-NO TIME FOR QUESTIONS, I'M AFRAID. THIS IS THE DEAL. A LIFE FOR A LIFE. A SOUL FOR A SOUL. YOUR LIFE OR MICHAEL'S.

ONE DIES, ONE LIVES. SIMPLE AS THAT.


THOMAS NEVER DOUBTS THAT THIS IS REAL, THAT MAMMON'S OFFER IS GENUINE.

KNEELING THERE WITH THE UNHOLY STENCH OF BLOOD AND SHIT AND CORDITE IN HIS NOSTRILS, AS THE WORLD SCREAMS AND SHATTERS AROUND HIM AND HIS SON'S LAST MEAL SPILLS FROM HIS RUPTURED BELLY, CAPTAIN THOMAS CORAM NEVER HESITATES.

THIS BOY'S LIFE IS WORTH HIS SOUL A HUNDRED TIMES OVER.


YES.






AND THEN, A MIRACLE. MICHAEL WILLIAMS RISES FROM THE CARNAGE AND WALKS THROUGH THE STORM OF BULLETS AND SHRAPNEL. A HUNDRED YARDS, TWO HUNDRED, THREE...

AS OTHER MEN FALL AROUND HIM, HE PASSES FROM THE GREEDY JAWS OF DEATH.



NOT QUITE UNTOUCHED. HE HAS STOPPED A 'BLIGHTY ONE,' A WOUND THAT WILL HAVE HIM SENT HOME TO ENGLAND AND HIS MOTHER'S LOVING ARMS.

A WOUND THAT WILL CAUSE HIM TO WALK WITH A LIMP FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE AND REMIND HIM ALWAYS, THAT HE HAD A FATHER.



CAPTAIN THOMAS CORAM'S BODY WAS NEVER RECOVERED.

ACCORDING TO THE RECORDS, THE WEATHER WAS FINE AND WARM ON THE SOMME THAT DAY...

... BUT THOMAS CORAM'S LAST MEMORY OF HIS MORTAL LIFE IS OF RAIN FALLING COOL UPON HIS FACE... AND THE SCENT OF NEW-MOWN HAY.

IT'S
THE
LAST
RAIN
HE
WILL
EVER
FEEL.

YOU'VE
SERVED ME
WELL, MAMMON,
AS ALWAYS. THIS
ONE WILL MAKE
AN EXCELLENT
WARRIOR.

HIS SOUL
IS A FINE VINTAGE.
A SUBTLE BOUQUET OF
GUILT, A HEADY FLAVOR
OF SELF-LOATHING,
DELICATELY SPICED WITH
ANGER AND A TRACE
OF BITTERNESS.

AND,
MMM-M-M-
YES, THAT LINGERING
AFTERTASTE OF
REGRET.

LOOK
AT ME, LITTLE
MAN!

I'LL SQUEEZE
YOUR PATHETIC
BROKEN HEART UNTIL
YOU SPIT BLOOD AND
PISS FIRE!

YOU'LL
HAVE A NEW
NAME NOW, AND
A NEW PURPOSE.
MY SERVITOR...

...MY...
HELLSPAWN!!

AAAAARRGHHH!!!

"WHEN ARMAGEDDON COMES, YOU WILL SERVE AS A COMMANDER IN MY ARMY. YOU WILL LEAD A LEGION OF DEMON WARRIORS AGAINST THE FORCES OF HEAVEN. UNTIL THAT DAY, YOU'LL REHEARSE YOUR ROLE WITHOUT PAUSE, WITHOUT A MOMENT'S RESPIRE.

"YOU WILL WAGE WAR UNTIL WAR BECOMES YOUR NATURE. WITH EVERY BLOW YOU STRIKE IN MY NAME, THE LIFE YOU'VE LEFT BEHIND WILL SLIP FURTHER AWAY.

"WITH EVERY SHOT YOU FIRE, YOU'LL LOSE ONE MORE PRECIOUS MEMORY UNTIL ALL YOU SEE AND SMELL AND HEAR IS WAR...

"... AND ALL THAT YOU REMEMBER IS WAR, AND ALL THAT YOU ARE IS WAR, WAR, WAR!!"





...BUT HE NEVER FORGETS WHY HE IS HERE, OR THE LIFE HE PAID FOR WITH HIS SOUL ...



AFTER THE WAR ENDED, MICHAEL TOOK HIS MOTHER BACK TO THE USA. SELMA NEVER MARRIED AGAIN. IN HER HEART SHE KNEW THAT THOMAS HAD KEPT HIS WORD.

SHE HAD LOVED HIM THROUGH ALL THE YEARS THEY WERE APART AND SHE LOVED HIM UNTIL SHE DIED.

MICHAEL BECAME A MUSICIAN AND PLAYED JAZZ IN THE CLUBS OF CHICAGO AND NEW ORLEANS.

IN 1926 HE MET A GIRL WHO SANG LIKE AN ANGEL AND TOOK HIS BREATH AWAY.

TWO YEARS LATER, THEY MARRIED.

BY THE NINETEEN-SIXTIES, MICHAEL WAS SURROUNDED BY LOVING CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN.



THOMAS COULD NEVER KNOW WHAT KIND OF LIFE HIS SON WOULD LIVE, BUT HE TRUSTED IT WOULD BE A GOOD ONE.

EVEN IN THE PIT OF HELL, THAT KNOWLEDGE HAS KEPT HIM FROM DESPAIR.



ALL THE WHILE, MAMMON WATCHES AND WAITS. THOMAS IS A MAGNIFICENT HELLSPAWN, BUT HE IS NOT THE GREATEST. THE GREATEST IS YET TO COME...

... AND MAMMON KNOWS HOW TO BIDE HIS TIME ...



I KNOW A GRANDPA ISN'T SUPPOSED TO HAVE FAVORITES, BUT JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME...

... YOU'RE SOMETHING **REALLY** SPECIAL ...



... MY LITTLE WANDA ...

